

BAPTIST QUESTION BOOK

ON

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

1877.

FIRST HALF.—THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.
SECOND HALF.—THE ACTS.

BY

REV. GRANVILLE S. ABBOTT.

PHILADELPHIA:

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
O. 1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

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KINGDOMS OF JUDAH & ISRAEL







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THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

THE system of uniform lessons in Sunday-schools is accomplishing blessed results in almost every land. As furnished by the International Committee, these lessons are largely in use in the United States, in Canada, in Mexico, by Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Moravians, Friends, members of the Reformed Church, Adventists, and others—a mighty list, to be enumerated by millions. They are also in use in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy, Greece; in Syria, Hindostan, Burmah, and China, “going with the sun around the globe to enlighten and to unify the nations.” There are few, if any, enterprises that have aimed at anything so vast and grand in modern times. The work seems really to be of God; and if of God, may it long continue, for in its very magnitude there is mighty inspiration.

In compliance with the request of the English brethren, the International Lessons for 1876 are somewhat longer than heretofore.

PREFACE.

THE author of this Question Book has failed to see how he could improve upon the general plan of working up a Bible Lesson followed by him in former volumes. He has acted, however, in a few instances upon the kind suggestions of his generous friends. Special pains has been taken with the "Daily Readings" and with the "Questions." The "Notes" and "Explanations" it is hoped will prove as valuable as any hitherto published in "The Baptist Question Book." To this, Maps, Chronological Tables, and a Geographical Index have been added, all of which are of service to Sunday-school Teachers and Scholars.

WATERTOWN, MASS., Sept. 1, 1876.

G. S. A.

SPECIAL NOTES.

I. THE author has taken special pains in the Old and New Testament study for the present year in presenting lines of travels by prophets and apostles, places, distances, geographical *data*, both in notes and questions, in such clearness and fulness as to fix the interest and to secure the profit that all Sunday-school officers, teachers, and scholars earnestly seek and gratefully receive.

II. A profitable exercise in preparation for the study, by classes, of these lessons, is to have the Notes or Historical Connections read, either by the superintendent or some one so requested to do, in the hearing of the whole school, just before General Study.

III. The author has endeavored to ask the most profitable questions it is in his power to put. He hopes they will all be asked at each lesson, and answered without needless detention on unimportant or irrelevant discussion. The object of Sunday-school study, as he understands it, is not primarily to discuss, but to learn as far as possible, the substance of God's word. *And in so doing, may the blessing of God that follows be abundant in measure and eternal in duration!*

RECOMMENDATIONS.

I. On Getting a Lesson.—Get it conscientiously and prayerfully with Bible in hand. *Get it in the exact order of its working up.* Neglect no references or compared Scriptures. There are precious things in these small spaces. Put to yourselves all the questions, and for yourselves answer them. Study the Historical Connection so well that you can set the lesson yourself in your own words. *Parents*, get the lesson with your children; they will quickly note your heedlessness of Sunday-school study, and soon be heedless themselves. *Officers of schools*, get the lessons as ensamples to your flocks. *Teachers*, get the lessons; your ignorance of them will cost you the respect of your scholars; your knowledge of them will shame their ignorance.

II. On what Superintendents can Do.—They can alternate with their schools in reading the Scripture of the lesson. They can appoint some one to recite or to read the Historical Connections in the hearing of the whole school, just before general study, thereby calling attention to a most important part of the lesson. They can now and then ask a few of the questions of their schools just before the session closes. They can sum up the leading thoughts and press home the practical truths.

III. On Teaching a Lesson.—Teach it, first of all, by setting it in its historic place. *Every lesson has a setting.* Teach it by putting to the class the questions we have asked, so as to bring out the exegetical and practical truths we have worked up. Teach it as the one lesson in hand; and for the time teach nothing else. A good workman usually has *special* work commanding his attention. Avoid trivial discussions and light class-talk. Fasten upon the leading thought, fact, or doctrine. *Every lesson has a hook.* Hang to it.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS, 1873.

FIRST QUARTER.

1. The Creation.....Gen. i. 1, 26-31
2. In Eden.....Gen. ii. 15-25
3. The Fall and the Promise.....Gen. iii. 1-8, 15
4. Cain and Abel.....Gen. iv. 3-10
5. Noah and the Ark.....Gen. vi. 13-18
6. The Bow in the Cloud.....Gen. ix. 8-17
7. Confusion of Tongues.....Gen. xi. 1-8
8. The Covenant with Abram.....Gen. xv. 1-7
9. Escape from Sodom.....Gen. xix. 15-26
10. Trial of Abraham's Faith.....Gen. xxii. 7-14
11. Jacob and Esau.....Gen. xxvii. 30-40
12. Jacob at Bethel.....Gen. xxviii. 10-22
13. Review.

SECOND QUARTER.

1. Israel—The New Name.....Gen. xxxii. 24-30
2. The Dreams of Joseph.....Gen. xxxvii. 3-11
3. Joseph Sold.....Gen. xxxvii. 23-28
4. The Lord with Joseph.....Gen. xxxix. 1-6, 20-23
5. Joseph Exalted.....Gen. xli. 37-49
6. The Report from Egypt.....Gen. xlii. 29-38
7. Joseph makes Himself known.....Gen. xlv. 1-8
8. Joseph sends for his Father.....Gen. xlv. 19-28
9. Israel in Egypt.....Gen. xlvii. 1-4, 29-32
10. Joseph and Pharaoh.....Gen. xlviii. 5-10
11. Prophetic Blessings.....Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; xlix. 8-10
12. The Last Days of Joseph.....Gen. l. 15-26
13. Review.

THIRD QUARTER.

1. The Child Jesus.....Matt. ii. 1-29
2. The Flight into Egypt.....Matt. ii. 13-23
3. The Baptism of Jesus.....Matt. iii. 13-17
4. The Temptation of Jesus.....Matt. iv. 1-11
5. The Ministry of Jesus.....Matt. iv. 17-25
6. The Beatitudes.....Matt. v. 1-12
7. Teaching to Pray.....Matt. vi. 5-15
8. The Two Foundations.....Matt. vii. 21-26
9. Power to Forgive Sins.....Matt. ix. 1-8
10. The Twelve Called.....Matt. x. 1-15
11. Jesus and John.....Matt. xi. 1-11
12. The Gracious Call.....Matt. xi. 25-30
13. Review.

FOURTH QUARTER.

1. Parable of the Sower.....Matt. xiii. 18-23
2. Walking on the Sea.....Matt. xiv. 22-38
3. The Cross Foretold.....Matt. xvi. 21-28
4. The Transfiguration.....Matt. xvii. 1-8
5. Jesus and the Young.....Matt. xix. 13-22
6. Hosanna to the Son of David.....Matt. xxi. 8-16
7. The Lord's Supper.....Matt. xxvi. 26-30
8. Jesus in Gethsemane.....Matt. xxvi. 36-46
9. Jesus before the High Priest.....Matt. xxvi. 59-68
10. Jesus before the Governor.....Matt. xxvii. 11-26
11. The Crucifixion.....Matt. xxvii. 45-54
12. The Resurrection.....Matt. xxviii. 1-8
13. Review.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS, 1874.

FIRST QUARTER.

1. The House of Bondage.....Exod. i. 7-14
2. The Birth of Moses.....Exod. ii. 1-10
3. The Call of Moses.....Exod. iii. 1-10
4. Doubts Removed.....Exod. iv. 1-9, 27-31
5. Jehovah's Promise.....Exod. vi. 1-8
6. The First Plague.....Exod. vii. 14-22
7. Jehovah's Passover.....Exod. xii. 21-30, 51
8. The Exodus.....Exod. xiii. 17-22
9. The Red Sea.....Exod. xiv. 19-31
10. Bitter Waters Sweetened.....Exod. xv. 22-27
11. Bread from Heaven.....Exod. xvi. 1-5, 31-37
12. Defeat of Amalek.....Exod. xvii. 8-16
13. Review: The Song of Moses.....Exod. xv. 1-11

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1. The Ten Commandments.....Exod. xx. 1-17
2. The Golden Calf.....Exod. xxxii. 1-6, 19, 20
3. The People Forgiven.....Exod. xxxiii. 12-20
4. The Tabernacle set up.....Exod. xl. 17-39
5. The Five Offerings.....Lev. vii. 37, 38
6. The Three Great Feasts.....Lev. xxiii. 4-6, 15-21, 33-36
7. The Lord's Ministers.....Num. iii. 5-13
8. Israel's Unbelief.....Num. xiv. 1-10
9. The Smitten Rock.....Num. xx. 7-13
10. The Serpent of Brass.....Num. xxi. 4-9
11. The True Prophet.....Deut. xviii. 9-16
12. The Death of Moses.....Deut. xxxiv. 1-12
13. Review: Mercies Reviewed.....Deut. viii

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1. The Beginning of the Gospel.....Mark i. 1-11
2. The Authority of Jesus.....Mark i. 16-27
3. The Leper Healed.....Mark i. 38-45
4. The Publican Called.....Mark ii. 13-17
5. Jesus and the Sabbath.....Mark ii. 23-28; iii. 1-5
6. Power over Nature.....Mark iv. 35-41
7. Power over Demons.....Mark v. 1-15
8. Power over Disease.....Mark v. 24-34
9. Power over Death.....Mark v. 22, 23, 35-43
10. Martyrdom of the Baptist.....Mark vi. 20-29
11. The Five Thousand Fed.....Mark vi. 34-44
12. Syrophenician Mother.....Mark vii. 24-30
13. Review: Lessons of the Quarter.

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1. The Deaf Mute.....Mark vii. 31-37
2. The Evil Spirit Cast Out.....Mark ix. 17-29
3. The Mind of Christ.....Mark ix. 33-42
4. Blind Bartimeus.....Mark x. 46-52
5. The Fig Tree Withered.....Mark xi. 12-14, 19-24
6. The Two Commandments.....Mark xii. 28-34
7. Hypocrisy and Piety.....Mark xii. 38-44
8. The Anointing at Bethany.....Mark xiv. 3-9
9. The Betrayal.....Mark xiv. 42-50
10. The Denial.....Mark xiv. 66-72
11. The Crucifixion.....Mark xv. 22-39
12. The Risen Lord.....Mark xvi. 9-20
13. Review: Lessons of the Quarter.

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1. Joshua Encouraged.....Joshua i. 1-9
2. Crossing the Jordan.....Joshua iii. 14-17
3. Memorial Stones.....Joshua iv. 4-9
4. Preparation for Conquest.....Joshua v. 9-15
5. Jericho Taken.....Joshua vi. 12-20
6. Achan's Sin.....Joshua vii. 19-26
7. Ebal and Gerizim.....Joshua viii. 30-35
8. Caleb's Inheritance.....Joshua xiv. 6-15
9. The Land Divided.....Joshua xviii. 1-10
10. The Cities of Refuge.....Joshua xx. 1-9
11. The Altar of Witness.....Joshua xxii. 21-27
12. Joshua's Warning.....Joshua xxiii. 11-16
13. Review: God's Mercies to Israel.....Joshua xxiv. 1-13

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1. Israel's Promise.....Joshua xxiv. 14-18
2. The Promise Broken.....Judges ii. 11-16
3. The Call of Gideon.....Judges vi. 11-18
4. Gideon's Army.....Judges vii. 1-8
5. The Death of Samson.....Judges xvi. 25-31
6. Ruth and Naomi.....Ruth i. 16-22
7. A Praying Mother.....1 Sam. i. 21-28
8. The Child Samuel.....1 Sam. iii. 1-10
9. The Death of Eli.....1 Sam. iv. 12-18
10. Samuel the Judge.....1 Sam. vii. 5-12
11. A King Desired.....1 Sam. viii. 4-9
12. Saul Chosen.....1 Sam. x. 17-24
13. Review: Samuel's Parting Words.....1 Sam. xii. 20-25

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1. The Word made Flesh.....John i. 1-14
2. Following the Lamb.....John i. 35-46
3. Jesus at the Marriage.....John ii. 1-11
4. The New Birth.....John iii. 7-17
5. The Water of Life.....John iv. 5-15
6. Jesus at Bethesda.....John v. 5-15
7. The Bread of Life.....John vi. 47-68
8. Jesus the Christ.....John vii. 40-46
9. Freedom by the Truth.....John viii. 28-36
10. The Light of the World.....John ix. 1-11
11. The Good Shepherd.....John x. 1-11
12. The Resurrection and the Life.....John xi. 34-44
13. Review: Christ Rejected.....John xi. 47-68

FOURTH QUARTER.

1. Jesus Lifted Up.....John xii. 23-33
2. Washing the Disciples' Feet.....John xiii. 1-9
3. Many Mansions.....John xiv. 1-7
4. The Vine and the Branches.....John xv. 1-8
5. Friends and Foes of Jesus.....John xv. 11-19
6. The Work of the Spirit.....John xvi. 7-14
7. Jesus Interceding.....John xvii. 15-21
8. Jesus the King.....John xviii. 35-38
9. Jesus on the Cross.....John xix. 25-30
10. Jesus and Mary.....John xx. 11-18
11. Jesus and Thomas.....John xx. 24-31
12. Jesus and Peter.....John xxi. 15-22
13. Review: The Ministry of Jesus.

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1. Saul Rejected.....	1 Sam. xv. 10-23
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3. David and Goliath.....	1 Sam. xvii. 38-51
4. David in the Palace.....	1 Sam. xviii. 1-16
5. David and Jonathan.....	1 Sam. xx. 35-42
6. David Sparing Saul.....	1 Sam. xxiv. 1-16
7. Saul and his Sons Slain.....	1 Sam. xxxi. 1-6
8. David Established King.....	2 Sam. v. 17-25
9. The Ark Brought to Zion.....	2 Sam. vi. 1-15
10. God's Covenant with David.....	2 Sam. vii. 18-29
11. Absalom's Rebellion.....	2 Sam. xv. 1-14
12. Absalom's Death.....	2 Sam. xviii. 24-33
13. Review: Saul and David Contrasted.....	Ps. 51

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1. The Ascending Lord.....	Acts i. 1-12
2. The Day of Pentecost.....	Acts ii. 1-11
3. Peter's Defence.....	Acts ii. 12-28
4. The Early Christian Church.....	Acts ii. 37-47
5. The Lame Man Healed.....	Acts iii. 1-11
6. The Power of Jesus' Name.....	Acts iii. 12-26
7. Christian Courage.....	Acts iv. 8-22
8. Christian Fellowship.....	Acts iv. 23-37
9. Lying unto God.....	Acts v. 1-11
10. The Apostles in Prison.....	Acts v. 12-26
11. The Apostles before the Council.....	Acts v. 27-42
12. The Seven Chosen.....	Acts vi. 1-15
13. Review: The Founding of the Church.....	

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1. David's Charge to Solomon.....	1 Chron. xxviii. 1-10
2. Solomon's Choice.....	2 Chron. i. 1-17
3. Solomon's Temple.....	2 Chron. iii. 1-17
4. The Temple Dedicated.....	1 Kings viii. 5-21
5. Solomon's Prayer.....	1 Kings viii. 22-30
6. Solomon's Prosperity.....	1 Kings x. 1-10
7. The Call of Wisdom.....	Prov. i. 20-33
8. The Value of Wisdom.....	Prov. iii. 1-19
9. Honest Industry.....	Prov. vi. 6-22
10. Intemperance.....	Prov. xxiii. 29-35
11. The Excellent Woman.....	Prov. xxxi. 10-31
12. A Godly Life.....	Ecc. xii. 1-14
13. Review: Upon Solomon.....	Ecc. xii. 14

FOURTH QUARTER.

1. Stephen's Defence.....	Acts vii. 1-19
2. Stephen's Defence.....	Acts vii. 35-50
3. Stephen's Martyrdom.....	Acts vii. 51-60
4. Simon the Sorcerer.....	Acts viii. 9-25
5. Philip and the Ethiopian.....	Acts viii. 26-40
6. Saul's Conversion.....	Acts ix. 1-18
7. Saul's Early Ministry.....	Acts ix. 19-30
8. Dorcas Restored to Life.....	Acts ix. 31-43
9. Peter's Vision.....	Acts x. 1-20
10. The Gentiles Received.....	Acts x. 34-48
11. Spread of the Gospel.....	Acts xi. 19-30
12. Peter's Release.....	Acts xii. 1-17
13. Review: The Early Converts.....	2 Cor. v. 17
14. Annual Review: Last Things.....	Rom. xiv. 10

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1877.

FIRST QUARTER.

1. *January 7. The Kingdom Divided.*—1 Kings xii. 12-20.
2. *January 14. The Sin of Jeroboam.*—1 Kings xii. 25-33.
3. *January 21. Omri and Ahab.*—1 Kings xvi. 22-34.
4. *January 28. Elijah the Tishbite.*—1 Kings xvii. 1-16.
5. *February 4. Elijah and Ahab.*—1 Kings xviii. 5-18.
6. *February 11. Elijah and the Prophets of Baal.*—1 Kings xviii. 19-29.
7. *February 18. Elijah and his Sacrifice.*—1 Kings xviii. 36-46.
8. *February 25. Elijah at Horeb.*—1 Kings xix. 8-18.
9. *March 4. The Story of Naboth.*—1 Kings xxi. 4-14.
10. *March 11. Elijah Translated.*—2 Kings ii. 1-12.
11. *March 18. The Spirit on Elisha.*—2 Kings ii. 13-25.
12. *March 25. REVIEW.*

SECOND QUARTER.

1. *April 1. The Oil Increased.*—2 Kings iv. 1-7.
2. *April 8. The Shunammite's Son.*—2 Kings iv. 25-37.
3. *April 15. Naaman the Leper.*—2 Kings v. 1-14.
4. *April 22. Gehazi the Leper.*—2 Kings v. 20-27.
5. *April 29. Elisha at Dothan.*—2 Kings vi. 8-18.
6. *May 6. The Famine in Samaria.*—2 Kings vii. 12-20.
7. *May 13. Jehu the King.*—2 Kings x. 20-31.
8. *May 20. Jonah at Nineveh.*—Jonah iii. 1-10.
9. *May 27. The Death of Elisha.*—2 Kings xiii. 14-21.
10. *June 3. The Lamentation of Amos.*—Amos v. 1-15.
11. *June 10. The Promise of Revival.*—Hosea xiv. 1-9.
12. *June 17. The Captivity of Israel.*—2 Kings xvii. 6-18.
13. *June 24. REVIEW.*

THIRD QUARTER.

1. *July 1. Paul in Cyprus.*—Acts xiii. 1-13.
2. *July 8. Paul at Antioch.*—Acts xiii. 26-41.
3. *July 15. Turning to the Gentiles.*—Acts xiii. 42-52.
4. *July 22. Paul at Lystra.*—Acts xiv. 8-20.
5. *July 29. The Yoke Broken.*—Acts xv. 22-31.
6. *August 5. Paul sent to Macedonia.*—Acts xvi. 1-15.
7. *August 12. Paul and Silas in Prison.*—Acts xvi. 22-34.
8. *August 19. Thessalonians and Bereans.*—Acts xvii. 1-14.
9. *August 26. Paul at Athens.*—Acts xvii. 22-34.
10. *September 2. Paul at Corinth.*—Acts xviii. 1-11.
11. *September 9. Paul at Ephesus.*—Acts xix. 1-12.
12. *September 16. Power of the Word.*—Acts xix. 17-28.
13. *September 23. Paul at Miletus.*—Acts xx. 17-32.
14. *September 30. REVIEW.*

FOURTH QUARTER.

1. *October 7. Paul at Cesarea.*—Acts xxi. 8-15.
2. *October 14. Paul at Jerusalem.*—Acts xxi. 27-39.
3. *October 21. Paul and the Bigoted Jews.*—Acts xxii. 17-30.
4. *October 28. Paul before the Council.*—Acts xxiii. 1-11.
5. *November 4. Paul before Felix.*—Acts xxiv. 10-25.
6. *November 11. Paul before Agrippa.*—Acts xxvi. 6-20.
7. *November 18. Almost Persuaded.*—Acts xxvi. 21-29.
8. *November 25. Paul in the Storm.*—Acts xxvii. 14-26.
9. *December 2. The Deliverance.*—Acts xxvii. 33-44.
10. *December 9. Paul in Melita.*—Acts xxviii. 1-10.
11. *December 16. Paul at Rome.*—Acts xxviii. 16-31.
12. *December 23. Paul's Last Words.*—2 Tim. iv. 1-8.
13. *December 30. REVIEW.*

THE
BAPTIST QUESTION BOOK.
1877.

FIRST QUARTER.

Jan. 7.]

LESSON I.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED.—1 Kings 12:12-20. B. C. 975.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 16-20.

12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: Now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died: therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 ¶ And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

Historical Connection.—In 1875 we studied the Jewish theocracy (state ruled directly by God) under Joshua and the Judges (B. C. 1451-1095); in 1876, the Jewish monarchy, subordinate to the theocracy, under Saul, David, and Solomon (B. C. 1095-975). We saw Solomon in his glory, but not in his shame (1 Kings 11:1-8); because of which God divided his hitherto united kingdom. 1 Kings 11:11-13. Stanley is hardly just in ranking Solomon in Jewish history with Bacon in English, as

"The wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind,"

for he lived, doubtless, to regret his sad career. Eccl. 1:2. But it was too late. The decree had gone forth. Solomon died, and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead. He had not, however, been formally recognized as king by all the tribes. Hoping for this acknowledgment from all the Jews, he went to Shechem, in Ephraim, north of Judah. But this politic attempt to conciliate public favor failed; for Jeroboam the Ephraimite, whom Solomon had designed to kill (1 Kings 11:26-40), improved the occasion of the young king's visit to Shechem by blowing the embers of envy to flame among the tribes that cherished the rivalry of centuries. Hence the outbreak of the revolution against Judah, and the division of the Jewish kingdom.

The Two Kingdoms.—The Jews were no longer one people, but two bands. Israel had ten pieces, or tribes (1 Kings 11:31); Judah, one tribe. Levi was not enumerated. According to Kiepert's *Bible Atlas*, the area of Israel was about 9375 sq. miles, or nearly that of New Hampshire; Judah, 3435. The controlling tribe of Israel was Ephraim. It had a central position, and great prestige from prior honors and services. Joshua, Samuel, and others of note belonged to it; Jacob's well and parcel of ground; Gerizim and Ebal; Shechem and Shiloh. It could not therefore easily endure long inferiority to Judah. Hence, in the hour of Judah's reproach for the scandal of Solomon's reign, Ephraim withdrew the willing allegiance it had yielded to David; hence the envyings of Ephraim and the vexings of Judah in subsequent Jewish history; hence the deep significance of that prophesied period (Isa. 11:13), when all these things, not only among the Jews, but among all peoples, shall have passed away for ever. God speed the day!

*"Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates the excellence it cannot reach."—Thomson.*

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Rehoboam slights Israel, vs. 12-14.	<i>Mon.</i> 1 Kings 12:1-20.
II. Fulfils God's plan, v. 15.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 13; Prov. 4.
III. Israel revolts, vs. 16-19.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 15; Gen. 50:15-26.
IV. Makes Jeroboam king, v. 20.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 18; Luke 3:12-22.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 20; Ps. 75.
	<i>Sat.</i> Jas. 3:1-18.
	<i>Sun.</i> Isa. 11:10-16.

EXPLANATIONS.—(12.) So Jeroboam the Ephraimite, ch. 11:26, 40, came to Rehoboam, at Shechem, v. 1, the

third day, according to instructions, v. 5. (13.) **answered . . . roughly**, careless of the national disaffection; **forsook the old men's counsel**, see v. 7, recommending concession, as old men usually do. (14.) **spake the counsel of the young men**, more heated than wise. **My father made your yoke heavy**, as you have said. The complaint was doubtless exaggerated, in order to justify revolt; **with scorpions**, a long scourge, armed with knots and spikes of metal. (15.) **hearkened not**, as he should have, as a ruler; **for the cause was from the Lord**, so turning human events as to accomplish his designs (see ch. 11:31-37; 12:24; 14:7, 8; Acts 2:23; Gen, 50:20); **spake by Ahijah**, ch. 11:11, 31. (16.) **the people answered the king**, indignantly, and as one man. "It was a national watch-word, and not the war-cry of a single tribe."

*"What portion have we in David?
Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse:
To your tents, O Israel:
See to thine house, David."*

(17.) **which dwelt in the cities of Judah**, priests, Levites, and others soon after. 2 Chron. 11:13-17. (18.) **Then king Rehoboam**, still in Shechem, and singularly heedless of the growing revolution; **sent Adoram**, the worst man he could have sent, he having served in the same unpopular office then, as tax-collector under Solomon (ch. 4:6; 5:14); **stoned him**, with this exception the revolution against Judah was bloodless (see v. 24); **made speed**, as if just awake; **to flee to Jerusalem**, from which he never returned as king to Shechem. (20.) **was come again**—i. e., from Egypt (ch. 11:40); **king over all Israel** (see note on "The Two Kingdoms"); **there was none**. See exceptions in v. 21, where neighborly interests promoted mutual alliance.

QUESTIONS.

Questions upon Historical Connection.—What did we study in 1875? Meaning of theocracy? How long did this period of the theocracy continue? What did we study in 1876? How many years did each of these three reigns cover? In what character did we not see the reign of Solomon? What evidence is there that he lived to regret his sad career? Nevertheless, what prediction was uttered against his kingdom? 1 Kings 11:11-13. Does repentance destroy the influence of a sinful life?

Questions upon The Two Kingdoms.—Into how many parts were the Jews now divided? How many pieces is Israel to

have? What was their territorial area? Name of the controlling tribe of Israel? Give some reasons for this pre-eminence. To what tribe could it not endure to be inferior? What did Ephraim finally do? How did Ephraim and Judah afterward treat each other? Which was led into captivity first? 2 Kings 17:13, 14.

- V. 12. Of what tribe was Jeroboam? 1 Kings 11:26. What had Solomon sought to do with him? 1 Kings 11:40. Why? 1 Kings 11:29-39. Whose son was Rehoboam? Name of his mother? 1 Kings 14:21. Why was he now in Shechem? See v. 1. What was the complaint of the people to him? vs. 3-5. Was it altogether just?
- V. 13. What was the old men's counsel? Has all this disrespect for age passed away?
- V. 14. Which is better, the combative or the conciliatory temperament? What will a soft answer often do? Prov. 15:1.
- V. 15. How could Rehoboam be guilty, and this cause be from the Lord? Is man any the less accountable because God overrules sin in the furtherance of his wise designs? Cite other examples. Matt. 26:24; Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23.
- V. 16. The revolution has broken out; what was now the national war-cry?
- V. 19. The divisions of Ephraim and Judah were never fully healed; what says prophecy, however? Isa. 11:13. What does God's word say of envy? What is envy?

Summary.—Envy, under the pretext of unrelieved public burdens, accomplished the division of the kingdom. It was at first a theocracy, then a united monarchy, now a divided monarchy, each under the theocracy. Rehoboam reigns over *Judah*; Jeroboam over *Israel*; God over both.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him."
—1 KINGS 12:8.

Jan. 14.]

LESSON II.

THE SIN OF JEROBOAM.—1 Kings 12:25-33. B. C. 975.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 26-31.

25 ¶ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David :

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem : behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin : for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made : and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart ; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel : and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Historical Connection.—Having returned to Jerusalem, Rehoboam proposed to attack Israel at once, to recover the portion of the kingdom that had revolted from him. But the Lord forbade the shedding of blood, and said, "Return every man to his house, for this thing is from me." The division of the kingdom is now an established fact, and the narrative without delay introduces us, not to *Rehoboam* over the kingdom of Judah, but to *Jeroboam* over the kingdom of Israel. *To this latter kingdom our Old Testament lessons for the present year are wholly devoted.* The perpetuity of Jeroboam's royal house, as will be seen from 1 Kings 11:37-39, is conditioned upon his keeping the statutes and commandments of Jehovah. With such a promise it would seem as if he might be easily and steadily obedient. But he is not. He no sooner becomes king than he forgets that his elevation is due to God. He prefers to rely upon the devices of a mere human policy rather than upon the will of Jehovah alone. He rejects Jehovah, the true God, in part at least, and commits idolatry, all for considerations of self-interest ; or, as we say, he does evil that good may come. But the plans he institutes for his political safety will bring about his moral as well as his political ruin. See ch. 14:7-16. For it was a truth then, and it is a truth now, that the cause of God is harmed, and not helped, by the schemes of wickedness, and that every sin committed for the sake of expediency is in God's sight filthy and vile. How loud is the charge of dishonor uttered in the Bible against Jeroboam ! "*Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin.*" 2 Kings 10:29. This is the sin, "again and again repeated in the policy, half worldly, half religious, which has prevailed through large tracts of ecclesiastical history." It prevailed in New England in the days of the Halfway Covenant.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Jeroboam a Builder, v. 25.	<i>Mon.</i> 1 Kings 12: 25-33.
II. Jeroboam a Doubter, vs. 26, 27.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 26; Mark 7: 14-23.
III. Jeroboam an Idolater, vs. 28-33.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 28; Ex. 20: 1-21.
	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 30; Ps. 1.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 32; Deut. 29.
	<i>Sat.</i> 1 Kings 13.
	<i>Sun.</i> 1 John 2: 15-29.

EXPLANATIONS.—(25.) **built Shechem**—that is, enlarged it. It had been rebuilt since Judges 9: 1, 45. **Penuel**, the ancient *Pe'niel*, beyond Jordan. Gen. 32: 30. (26.) **Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David.** This was Jeroboam's fear, grounded upon what seemed to him the best of reasons. Knowing that the people went to Jerusalem to the three yearly festivals, and that the Levites went up in their turns to conduct the temple service, he naturally anticipated a reaction against himself and in favor of the king of Judah. Humanly speaking, therefore, it was not strange that Jeroboam cast about for something to prevent such a political reaction. Still, it showed a lack of faith in the promise of God to perpetuate his house on the condition of obedience. 1 Kings 11: 38. (28.) **made two calves of gold**, symbols possibly of an Egyptian deity; imitations possibly of the two cherubim that guarded the ark in the holy of holies. 2 Chron. 3: 10. "Israel sojourned in Egypt and brought home one golden calf (Ex. 32: 4); Jeroboam sojourned there and brought home two. It is hard to dwell in Egypt untainted."—*Bishop Hall*. **behold thy gods, O Israel**, almost the exact words of Aaron. Ex. 32: 8. Possibly Jeroboam plead the authority of Aaron's example. Why was he not hindered by its punishment? (29.) **one in Beth-el**, at the southern extremity of Israel; **the other put he in Dan**, at the northern extremity, so consulting the convenience of the people. (30.) **this thing became a sin**—that is, the *occasion* of sin to the people. To be a follower of evil leaders is bad enough, but to be the leader in sin, and a king at that, is a crime, as another has said, "too deep for hell." (31.) **a house of high places**, or a temple for idolatrous worship, probably, in each of these cities; **priests of the lowest of the people**, Jeroboam had set aside the *places*

appointed by the Lord for worship; now he sets aside God's *ministers*, the Levites. (32.) **ordained a feast in the eighth month**, in distinction from the *times* of worship at Jerusalem. These he also sets aside. (33.) **he offered**, constituting himself a priest as well as king; **in the month he had devised of his own heart**, showing that Jeroboam did as it pleased him, regardless of the divinely-appointed *places*, *ministers*, *times*, and *manner* of worship. Placed in a seemingly difficult position, he acted like a schemer, and not like a trustful believer in God. What wonder that the subjects became brutish, since Jeroboam has made a calf his god? Under the example of such a king the ten tribes became a nation of idolaters. Oh, cursed Jeroboam, cursed by all ages!

"Likening his Maker to the grazed ox."

QUESTIONS.

Questions upon Historical Connection.—After his return to Jerusalem, what did Rehoboam at once propose to do? Why was the attack not made? To what kingdom does the sacred narrative now introduce us? About what one kingdom shall we study this year? What promise has God made to Jeroboam's house? On what condition?

- V. 25. Where was Shechem? Where Penuel?
- V. 26. Jeroboam feared the return of his people to the house of David; upon what were his fears grounded? What did these fears show that he lacked?
- V. 28. What was Jeroboam's scheme to prevent the realization of his fears? What did these two calves of gold possibly resemble? Where were they placed? Why? What commandment did this idolatry violate? Ex. 20:4. How does Christianity meet the demand of idolatry for sensible objects to worship? 1 Tim. 3:16. Did Jeroboam design to utterly overthrow the worship of the one true and living God? Ans. *Probably not, intending rather to mix Jewish worship with the worship of surrounding nations. He sought to advance his political interests by serving God and Mammon. Nor was he the last of his race.* What ancient example of judgment ought to have frightened Jeroboam from this sin?
- V. 30. How did this thing become a sin to the people? Which is worse, the follower or the leader of wickedness? How is Jeroboam regarded in Jewish history? 2 Kings 10:29.
- V. 31. What one place for divine worship do Jeroboam's high places set aside? What order of ministry do his priests from the lowest of the people displace? How does he show himself careless of the appointed times for true worship?

- V. 33. What other innovation upon established usage appears in this verse? Who at last overthrew Jeroboam's altars? Comp. 1 Kings 13:1, 2 with 2 Kings 23:15, 16 (B. C. 975-625). In reviewing this lesson, what should you say is its practical teaching? Can anything ever be so desirable as to justify the violation of a precept of God's word? Is the power of the Church of Christ ever advanced by worldly devices?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And he shall give Israel up, because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin."
—1 KINGS 14:16.

Jan. 21.]

LESSON III.

OMRI AND AHAB.—1 Kings 16:23-34. B. C. 925-918.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 30-33.

23 ¶ In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

25 ¶ But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him.

26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

29 ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that *were* before him.

31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for

him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a grove: and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34 ¶ In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

Historical Connection.—No warnings (1 Kings 13:1-3) had any permanent effect upon idolatrous Jeroboam; nor had the death of his son Abijah, “mercifully removed from the wickedness about him.” Not long after Abijah’s death, Jeroboam himself died (1 Kings 14:19, 20), and Nadab his son reigned in his stead—reigned for two years only (B. C. 954-953), imitating the sins of his father; after this, falling a victim to the conspiracy of Baasha, the captain of his host, who killed the king and all the house of Jeroboam; in this fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah. 1 Kings 15:25-30. *No ends the dynasty of Jeroboam, the first dynasty of Israel.* With Baasha, son of Abijah, of the tribe of Issachar, the second dynasty begins. He reigns at Tirzah twenty-four years (B. C. 953-930), but without improvement on the reign of Jeroboam or Nadab. He makes unsuccessful war with Judah, dies, leaves his crown to Elah, his son, who reigns parts of two years only (B. C. 930-929), and is slain when intoxicated by Zimri, one of his commanders. Zimri usurps the throne, but holds it only seven days. A civil war then breaks out between Omri, a captain of the host to Elah, on the one side, and Tibni and Joram on the other, resulting in the triumph of Omri. *No ends the dynasty of Baasha, the second dynasty of Israel* (B. C. 925). With Omri the third dynasty begins. Omri reigns six years (B. C. 925-918), or twelve, reckoning from the beginning of the civil war (B. C. 929). He surpassed all before him in wickedness. Then he is succeeded by Ahab, his son, weaker still, and more sinful; and so the history of Israel deepens into the dark night of spiritual declension and apostasy from God.

ANALYSIS.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| I. Omri | { reigns, v. 23.
works, vs. 24, 25.
sins, vs. 26, 28. |
| II. Ahab | { reigns, v. 29.
sins, vs. 30-33.
works, v. 34. |

DAILY READINGS.

Mon.	1 Kings 16: 23-34.
Tues.	v. 23; 1 Kings 15: 9-34.
Wed.	v. 25; Micah 1: 1-9.
Thurs.	v. 30; Deut. 29.
Fri.	v. 31; Deut. 7: 1-11.
Sat.	v. 32; Jud. 10: 6-16.
Sun.	Ps. 115.

EXPLANATIONS.—(23.) **thirty and first year of Asa,** he reigned forty-one years in all (B. C. 955-914); see 1 Kings

15:10; a good king, v. 11; **began Omri**, his parentage and tribe are unknown; **twelve years**, including the years of civil war with Tibni; **in Tirzah**, the royal residence of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:17); of Baasha (15:21, 53); Elah. 16:8, 9. Here Zimri perished in the flames of the palace. v. 18. It was a beautiful city, supposed to have been three or four miles north from Shechem. (24.) **bought the hill of Samaria**, to the west of Tirzah but a short distance, there building his capital. The valley that runs westward between Ebal and Gerizim spreads out at a distance of three or four miles into a broad circular basin, five or six miles in diameter, and bounded on every side by mountains. From the plain of this beautiful amphitheatre of mountains, near the western side, rises a hill about four hundred feet high, on which Samaria was built. Mr. Layard found a tablet at Nineveh on which was the Hebrew name of the house of Omri; and as Samaria was taken by the Assyrians (B. C. 721), this discovery gives decided evidence of the truth of the Scriptures. See *Hackett's Illustrations*, pp. 191-197. It was six miles from Shechem. It showed, as Stanley says, "the sagacity" of Omri. It was the only great city founded by Israelitish sovereigns. It furnished the name to Central Palestine. But it now lies in desolation, fulfilling prophecy exactly. Mic. 1:6.

"I will pour into the valley her stones,
And her foundations I will make bare."

two talents of silver, about \$2500 in our money. (25.) **worse than all that were before him**, "reducing the calf-worship to a regular *formal* system, that went down to posterity." (28.) **Ahab his son**, from whom we are to learn the depths of wickedness into which a weak man may fall when abandoned to the guidance of another person, resolute, unscrupulous, and depraved. (31.) **took to wife Jezebel**, "a woman in whom, with the reckless and licentious habits of an Oriental queen, were united the fiercest and sternest qualities of the old Canaanitish race," the first record of such foreign marriages with the Israelitish kings; **went and served Baal**, the sun-god, a thoroughly idolatrous image-worship of the Phœnician deity. (32.) **an altar for Baal**, a prodigious step downward; and this in Samaria, not in Phœnicia. See ch. 18:19, 22; 2 Kings 10:26, 27. *Baal* was the name of the male divinity; *Astartê*, the female. The worship of Baal was very ancient. Num. 22:41. It had many modifi-

cations, hence its great variety of names. It consisted in the worship of nature in its strength and power, and ran into licentiousness. (34.) **build Jericho**, in violation of God's command. See Josh. 6:26.

QUESTIONS.

Questions on Historical Connection.—How was Jeroboam warned? How many years after this was the warning fulfilled? Ans. *Three hundred and sixty years.* See 2 Kings 23:15. Who succeeded Jeroboam in the kingdom of Israel? Who succeeded Baasha? Who succeeded Elah? What became of Zimri? With what king does the third dynasty of Israel begin?

Questions on the Lesson.—

- V. 23. How long was Asa king of Judah? Character of Asa? Where was Tirzah?
- V. 24. Where was the hill of Samaria? Describe it. In what condition is it now to be found? How much were two talents of silver?
- V. 25. Does wickedness ever reform itself? Why not? Why does its force increase instead of diminishing? What is the only check to wickedness? Rom. 5:20, 21. But for Christianity, to what would modern civilization return?
- V. 28. What is the great lesson to be learned from Ahab's life? How long did he reign? v. 29.
- V. 31. How did Ahab sin even more shamefully than Jeroboam? What qualities were united in Jezebel? See 2 Cor. 6:14, 15.
- V. 32. How ancient was the worship of Baal? How many prophets of Baal were there in Samaria? ch. 18:19. How was this house of Baal furnished? 2 Kings 10:26, 27. Of what was Baal the god?
- V. 33. In what did Baal-worship consist? Into what did it run? Why was it disobedience to rebuild Jericho? What punishment ensued? In what respects is idolatry in *spirit* as bad as idolatry in *form*? May it not be worse?

Reflection.—There are to be found gross and cruel idolatries, false gods, hideous and awful as Moloch or Baal, vicious and debasing as Ashtaroth, in nominally Christian lands.

GOLDEN TEXT.

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”—2 TIM. 3:13.

Jan. 28.]

LESSON IV.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.—1 Kings 17:1-16. B. C. 910.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 5-9.

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As the* LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 ¶ And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, *As the* LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not, go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

16 *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

Historical Connection.—In Israel the reign of Jezebel, of whom Ahab was the mere puppet, was not only idolatrous, but persecuting. The spirit of extermination and of blood passed from place to

place; overturning the altars of God; hunting down and killing the prophets—that class of men trained from the days of Samuel for religious instruction, and for guarding the spirit and practice of the people—some of whom, however, escaped to the caves and dens of the earth (1 Kings 18:13); “the precursors of the age of the catacombs and of the Covenanters.” Alas! alas! how is the glory of Israel departed! Not a star gleams upon the universal blackness. But on a sudden the scene changes, and the man Elijah, the chief of the prophets, falls, as Krummacher says, “from heaven into the midst of this awful night-piece.” It was a disastrous juncture, indeed; the ancient religion of Israel abrogated; an attempt to put, subtly and deliberately, in its place the Sidonian worship. But God had given a Noah to his age, a Moses to his, a Samuel to his. He now gives an Elijah to his. “The loftiest and sternest spirit of the old Jewish faith.” “A champion of the old Mosaic law.” The prototype of John the Baptist. A Luther to his age. He came from Gilead, beyond Jordan. This is all that is known of his family, birthplace, or training. “His dress,” as Milman says, “was that of the desert herdsman, the sheepskin, the leathern girdle, and the mantle of hair cloth dropping from his shoulders.” Thus did he appear when, all unexpectedly, he denounced upon Ahab the threatening of the dewless and rainless years.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Elijah threatens a drought, v. 1.
- II. Hides by the brook Cherith, vs. 2-7.
- III. Flees to Zarephath, vs. 8-16.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	1 Kings 17:1-16.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 1; Deut. 11:10-32.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 4; Gen. 8.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 7; Jas. 4:10-20.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 9; Luke 4:16-32.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 14; 2 Kgs. 4:38-44.
<i>SUN.</i>	v. 16; Matt. 14:13-21.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **And Elijah**, Elijah means “*Jehovah is my God*,” the **Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead**, where Thisbe was is not known; Gilead was beyond Jordan, wild and mountainous, half Arab in custom; **said unto Ahab**, standing before him, and departing from him, “with a suddenness of motion, to this day characteristic of the Bedouins of his native hills;” **not be dew nor rain**, as threatened in Deut. 11:17; 28:23, 24. We cannot realize the character of such a visitation as Orientals do, where *life and water* go together. In abundance of water we forget to be thankful. (3.) **by the brook Cherith**, one of the water-courses, probably on the east of the Jordan. (6.) **the ravens**, real ravens, commanded by the Lord and Creator of all creatures to provide his servant with bread and flesh. On the raven, see Gen. 8:7; Lev. 11:15; Job 28:41; Luke 12:24. (7.) **after a while**, possibly a year; **the brook dried**

up, slowly, before Elijah's eyes. Yet his faith failed not. (8.) **the word of the Lord came**, he would stay until it did come. "*They also serve who only stand and wait.*"—Milton. (9.) **get thee to Zarephath**, the New Testament Sarepta, between Tyre and Sidon. (10.) **the widow woman was there**, according to the word of the Lord (v. 9); **Fetch me, I pray thee**, she saw, and turned to do as bidden. "It was one of those cross-purposes of Providence which come in with a peculiar charm to checker the commonplace course of ecclesiastical history." (12.) **that we may eat it, and die**, the famine had evidently reached Phœnicia. (15.) **she went and did according**, believing the prophet (see Luke 4: 24-26); **many days**, a full year. (16.) **the barrel of meal wasted not**, the first miracle of its kind in the Bible. See 2 Kings 4: 42-44; Matt. 14: 15-21; 15: 32-38, for miracles of similar nature.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—What is to be said of Jezebel's reign in Israel? To what did the persecution extend? Will you describe the situation of affairs at the time of the appearance of Elijah? What was Elijah's spirit? What was his dress? Of whom was he a prototype?

On the Lesson.—

- V. 1. Meaning of the word Elijah? Of what land was he? Why was he not afraid to stand before Ahab? See Ex. 33: 14. Had this penalty of no rain predicted by him been foretold? By whom? Why was it a terrible visitation in Central Palestine? How long was the drought to continue?
- V. 2. Did Elijah at first know how God was to provide for him? Of what was faith, to Elijah, the evidence? Heb. 11: 1. Why does prosperity in the things of this world often enfeeble the exercise of faith?
- V. 3. Where was the brook Cherith? Why was Elijah commanded to hide himself? ch. 18: 4.
- V. 6. How was Elijah fed?
- V. 7. How long was Elijah at the brook Cherith? How was his faith here greatly tried? Why did he not yield here to hard thoughts of God? Why is it sometimes a part of the duty of faith to wait? Isa. 28: 16.
- V. 9. Where was Zarephath? Of what queen was the land of Sidon the native country? Why does not God tell Elijah where the widow woman would be found? What does Jesus say of this widow? Luke 4: 24-26.
- V. 10. Why does not Elijah first ask her if she have any water to give drink to a stranger?

- V. 12. What shows that the famine had reached Phœnicia?
- V. 13. Why does Elijah's request in this verse seem at first a little uncivil? How would exact compliance with it involve a miraculous supply? Compare v. 12 with v. 13.
- V. 15. Was the woman's saving or giving the way to her abundance? Prov. 11 : 24, 25.
- V. 16. What was the miracle wrought? Can you explain it? Would it be a miracle if you could?

In reviewing this lesson, cite the places where Elijah's faith is seen to be remarkable.

"Choose to believe, not see; sight tempts the heart
From sober walking in true gospel ways."—*Keble*.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"In famine he shall redeem thee
from death."—JOB 5 : 20.

Feb. 4.] LESSON V.

ELIJAH AND AHAB.—1 Kings 18 : 5-18. B. C. 906.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 15-18.

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art* thou that my lord Elijah?

8 And he answered him, I *am*: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*.

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*.

12 And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know

not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, *As* the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel?

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Historical Connection.—Elijah had secreted himself part, if not the whole, of a year at the brook Cherith; he was now in his third year at the house of the Sareptan woman in Sidon (ch. 18: 1), the famine covering, in all, three years and six months. Jas. 5: 17. "During this time the drought continued; the plains and valleys of Ephraim and of Zebulon lay parched and crumbling with heat; the fountains, the wells, the brooks, the rivers, of Samaria were dried up; there was not enough herbage to feed the royal horses. Then the king and his chief minister," as Milman calls Obadiah, "set off on a survey of the land, to see the extent of the calamity;" "for at Ahab's court there was at least one true servant of Jehovah, as there were Christians afterward in Nero's household." Phil. 4: 22. It was at this time of the drought that Elijah appears again before the king, having been commanded to do so by Jehovah (v. 1), and having previously sent to the king a message by the reluctant Obadiah. In our last lesson we saw Elijah as an individual sufferer. In this lesson he comes forward as a public champion of God in behalf of Israel. In departing from Ahab three years and a half since, Elijah "carried away the clouds with him." If they come again, Elijah must bring them. No rain must fall until Elijah is seen again by Ahab. So does God honor his ministers who proclaim his will. "Nothing but the tongue was Elijah's; the hand was God's; Elijah did but say what God would do."—*Bishop Hall.*

ANALYSIS.

- I. Obadiah seeking water, vs. 5, 6.
- II. Is met by Elijah, v. 7.
- III. Feels to announce him, vs. 8-15.
- IV. The announcement made, v. 16.
- V. Ahab and Elijah, vs. 17, 18.

DAILY READINGS.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Mon.</i> | 1 Kings 18: 5-18. |
| <i>Tues.</i> | v. 5; Isa. 55. |
| <i>Wed.</i> | v. 6; Phil. 6: 5-20. |
| <i>Thurs.</i> | v. 12; Eze. 3: 12-27. |
| <i>Fri.</i> | v. 13; Matt. 10: 16-24. |
| <i>Sat.</i> | v. 17; Josh. 7: 10-26. |
| <i>SUN.</i> | v. 18; Ps. 35. |

EXPLANATIONS.—(5.) **And Ahab said unto Obadiah**, not the author of the prophecy by that name, who lived about 585 B. C., but an officer of high rank in the court of Ahab (v. 3), a devout worshipper of Jehovah. That Ahab was aware of Obadiah's religion there can be no doubt. **fountains**, the ever-flowing streams; **brooks**, water-courses, sometimes dry. (6.) **Ahab went one way**, apart from Obadiah, each with his own retinue. (7.) **behold, Elijah met him**, as by a sudden apparition (see v. 12, also 2 Kings 2:16); **my lord Elijah?** showing Obadiah's humility. He gives the title "lord" to Elijah; to himself (v. 9) he applies the term "servant." (8.) **go, tell thy lord, Behold Elijah!** at first Elijah went to Ahab unheralded (ch. 17:1), now he asks to be announced. But Obadiah finds this load too heavy. He thinks it were better not to herald Elijah than to herald and not bring him. (10.) **no nation or kingdom**, of those over which Ahab had influence; **took an oath**, among the rest, possibly of Ethbaal, king of the land where Elijah had lived for nearly three years. (15.) **I will surely show myself unto him to-day**, so is Obadiah encouraged to do as bidden. (17.) **Art thou he that troubleth Israel?** "He that was the head of Israel speaks out that which was in the heart of all his people, that Elijah was the cause of all their sorrow."—*Hall*. (18.) **And he answered, I have not troubled Israel**. Ahab had hoped to abash the Tishbite, but Elijah meets his charge with a brave counter-charge: I have not troubled Israel, *but thou*. "For the only common disturber of men, families, cities, kingdoms, worlds, is sin." **Baalim**, plural for Baal; false gods of Baal-worship.

QUESTIONS.

Upon Historical Connection.—In what two places did Elijah conceal himself during the drought? How long did the drought continue? How serious was it? In what character does Elijah now come forward? Why must it not rain until Elijah has seen Ahab?

On the Lesson.—

- V. 5. Who was this Obadiah? From Ahab's tolerance of Obadiah's religion, what is learned of Ahab's character? What is the influence of evil associates? 1 Cor. 15:33. Are these associations an excuse for sin? God blesses abundantly; how does this drought show that he can punish?
- V. 6. How was the extent of the drought learned?

- V. 7. Elijah meant to show himself to both Ahab and Obadiah; why do you think he cared to show himself first to Obadiah? Obadiah was honored in Ahab's court; how does he honor the prophet of the Lord? What says Jesus of this act? Matt. 10: 41.
- V. 8. How differently from the first time does Elijah intend to go the second time to Ahab?
- V. 9. Will you give some of the reasons why Obadiah shrunk from hearing tidings of Elijah to Ahab? See vs. 7-15.
- V. 10. What king in particular may have taken this oath? Where was Elijah then?
- V. 12. By what power was it believed that the prophets were transported from place to place?
- V. 15. What is the influence of this pledge of Elijah upon Obadiah? v. 16.
- V. 16. Why did Ahab go to meet Elijah? Was the king's heart at all softened?
- V. 17. Why did Ahab charge Elijah with troubling Israel?
- V. 18. With what *counter-charge* does Elijah reply to Ahab? What had Israel forsaken? What followed? Is not blame often put where it does not belong? How was Jesus blamed? Matt. 9: 3, 4; 26: 65, 66. How was Paul? Acts 17: 6. How Peter? Acts 5: 28. What is the great disturber of this world?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day."—JOSH. 7: 25.

Feb. 11.]

LESSON VI.

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.—1 Kings 18: 19-29. B. C. 906.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 25-29.

19 Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord *be* God, follow

him : but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD ; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks ; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under* : and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under* :

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD ; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

25 ¶ And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first ; for ye *are* many : and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even unto noon, saying, O Baal, hear us ! But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud ; for he *is* a god : either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when mid-day was passed, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

The Challenge to the Prophets of Baal.—We now come to scenes of thrilling interest ; to a moment of grave responsibility ; yet Elijah is ready to bide the result. He will, for the time at least, settle the question whether Monotheism or Polytheism, one God or many gods, is to be the worship of Israel ; whether or not the old theocratic spirit, implanted in the Hebrew race at Mount Sinai, is to be trampled out utterly and its place to be filled with an idolatry for material forms, such as the sun, moon, and stars. Strange affair ! a subject prescribes, a king complies ! *Eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal to one of the Lord !*

Mount Carmel.—This is a bold promontory, about twenty miles west of Nazareth, running all but into the very waves of the Mediterranean ; the chief indentation in the coast in Central Palestine. From the sea it stretches as a ridge, or well-wooded upland, twelve or fifteen miles south-easterly, breaking abruptly into the hills of Samaria. To the Israelites Mount Carmel was the park of Palestine. It formed a boundary to the plain of Esdraelon on the north, and to the plain of Sharon on the south, through the former of which the Kishon flowed—almost parallel to the mountain—to its terminus in the sea at the mountain's northern base. The scene of Elijah's sacrifice was doubtless *inland*, a few miles from the sea, near to the

highest point of Mount Carmel (1728 feet).—*Stanley, Coleman, and others.* Here Esdraelon, Kishon, Jezreel, Ahab's palace, and Jezebel's temple were in full view. To this place, overlooking Palestine and the great and wide sea, the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and of Ashtoreth came; here, too, did the one prophet of the Lord come to vindicate the one God of Israel. It was in the early morning. Deep silence was over the multitude. See *Hackett's Illustrations*, p. 335, etc.

ANALYSIS.	READINGS.
I. Elijah's challenge to Ahab, vs. 19, 20.	<i>Mon.</i> 1 Kings 18: 19-29. <i>Tues.</i> v. 21; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.
II. Elijah's appeal to Israel, vs. 21-24.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 22; 2 Kgs. 6: 8-18.
III. Address to Baal's prophets, v. 25.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 24; Gen. 15.
IV. Baal deaf to them, v. 26.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 27; Isa. 44.
V. Elijah cheers them on, vs. 27-29.	<i>Sat.</i> v. 23; Acts 19: 21-41. <i>Sun.</i> v. 29; Jer. 10: 1-16.

EXPLANATIONS.—(19.) **prophets of Baal**, the male Phœnician divinity, as Ashtoreth was the female; **the prophets of the groves**, rather the "grove," which Ahab had built at Jezreel, in which the worship of Ashtoreth was probably most impure; Ashtoreth was the Phœnician Venus; **eat at Jezebel's table**, from its superfluity. (20.) **unto Mount Carmel**, the haunt of *Elijah*. (21.) **between two opinions**, or two "thoughts," showing that the people of Israel could not utterly forget what God had done to their fathers. "What pitiful double-mindedness!" (22.) **I, even I only, remain**, not strictly true (see v. 4, and ch. 22: 8); still, the only one now to publicly defend Jehovah. (24.) **the God that answereth by fire, let him be God**, this was to be the test. Baal-worshippers could not decline it; for they attributed thunder and lightning to their god. Elijah was prepared for it; for his God had often sent supernatural fire before; at Sodom (Gen. 19: 24); to Abram, where fire passed between the pieces (Gen. 15: 8-21); at the burning bush (Ex. 3: 2); in the matter of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10: 1, 2); of Korah (Num. 26: 10; also 1 Chron. 21: 26); 2 Chron. 7: 1. **It is well spoken**, dumb until now, the people say, "This is fair." (25.) **Choose you**, Elijah gives the prophets of Baal the first choice of bullocks, and also the initiative in the sacrifice, that the impression to be produced on king and people may be greater. (26.) **O Baal, hear us**. Having accepted the challenge, the Baal-priests do their best. **They**

screamed with "that sustained energy which believes it will be heard for much speaking." Matt. 6:7. Compare Acts 19:34. **leaped upon the altar**, or up and down at it, with wild fantastic gestures. (27.) **Elijah mocked them**, a ludicrous side in the Hebrew annals, "a savage humor, a biting sarcasm." "A little well-timed irony is often the best reply." "Fie! fie!" Cry on! cry louder! the greater the exertion, the more manifest the failure. **is pursuing**, or "meditating." (28.) **lancets**, rather "lances;" **till the blood gushed out**, in the phrenzy of their exertion to call Baal down. (29.) **there was neither voice, etc.**, so utterly unavailing had been their prolonged and increasingly intensified call.

QUESTIONS.

On the Challenge.—What question, for the time at least, is to be settled? What is to be understood by the theocratic spirit? (P. S.—Pastors and teachers should make the answer plain. The truth lodged in it is to be met continually in Old Testament study. The dictionaries will help them.) How is the conflict, as Elijah arranges it, a strange one?

On Mount Carmel.—Where is Mount Carmel? How far and in what direction does it stretch as a ridge? What plain lies to the north of it? What river? Where was the scene of Elijah's sacrifice? How high was this eastern bluff? What places were in full view of it?

On the Lesson.—

V. 19. Who was Baal? Who Ashtoreth? Character of her worship in the groves?

V. 21. What did the "two opinions" of the people indicate? Where do we find double-mindedness in the world to-day? Where in the visible church? Why is a compromise between God and the world impossible? Matt. 12:30; 2 Cor. 6:14-18. Why did the people answer him "not a word"?

V. 22. In what sense was Elijah's loneliness untrue? In what true?

V. 24. State the test that Elijah offers to Baal's prophets. Where had God answered by fire before? When will he answer by fire again? 2 Pet. 3:10.

V. 25. In what matters did Elijah give the prophets of Baal precedence? His object in so doing?

V. 26. The sacrifice being prepared, what did the priests of Baal proceed to do? How did they manifest their earnestness? What has Jesus called such prayers? Matt. 6:7. Is prayer any more acceptable to God because it is loud and noisy?

V. 27. In what light did Elijah mock them? When is irony a good weapon? When a dangerous one?

V. 28. What was the effect of Elijah's sarcasm?

- V. 29. What resulted from this whole-day call of the priests upon Baal? Why is an idol a mere nonentity—"nothing in the world"? How much better are those expressions of unbelievers—"intuitions"—"fate"—"fortune"—"reason"—"*universal Father*"—than gods of Baal? Have they any ears to hear? Any power to save? Is the god of polished circles, discarding the Bible, any better than Baal of old? Ans. *Not one whit. It is not Jehovah at all to them, but to each simply*

"The god of my idolatry."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."—1 KINGS 18:21.

Feb. 18.]

LESSON VII.

ELIJAH AND HIS SACRIFICE.—1 Kings 18:36-46.

B. C. 906.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 36-39.

36 And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that thou *art* the Lord God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he *is* the God; the Lord, he *is* the God.

40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went

up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is nothing.* And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's band. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah: and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

A Word in Passing.—We left the dressed bullock of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel *unconsumed*. Neither the hoarse cries of the priests, nor their wild dances, nor their knives nor lances, had opened Baal's dull ear or more dull heart. It must ever be thus with a mere will-worship; whole hours, days, and lives of which are all in vain. It is all self-righteousness, and displeasing to God, whether performed by Baal's priests, by Roman Catholic devotees, or by proud European or American dreamers and rationalists; the god whom they serve being no God, but an imagination of their own. The scene now changes. Instead of the phrenzy of the priests of Baal, we behold the calmness and tranquillity of Elijah. That his people may come around him, the hostile prophets are made to stand aloof. v. 30. He repairs the old altar of Jehovah, which Jezebel possibly had torn down. He takes *twelve* stones out of the ruins thereof with which to do it, thereby calling to remembrance, as Kiel observes, the number of the tribes, their real unity in God's sight, and the sin of their separation. He makes a trench about the altar, puts the wood on the altar, and the bullock, cut in pieces, on the wood. He drenches the wood and the sacrifice three times in succession with water brought from a perennial fountain in Eastern Carmel, "where the dews of the wooded upland are condensed from the soft Mediterranean air." "Then," as Stanley says, "as the hour of the coming sacrifice drew near, and as the sun began to descend toward the western sea, with no frantic gesticulations or vain reiteration, Elijah sent up into the evening heaven four short cries to the God of his fathers." They needed but a few short seconds to be uttered, then the answer that was denied to the wild, self-torturing prophets of Baal was granted without delay to the prophet of God.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Elijah's prayer, vs. 36, 37.
- II. His sacrifice consumed, v. 38.
- III. Decision of the people, v. 39.
- IV. Slaughter of Baal's prophets, v. 40.
- V. Rain, vs. 41-46.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	1 Kings 18: 30-46.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 36; Num. 16: 23-50.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 37; Neh. 9: 22-31.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 40; Deut. 17: 2-7.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 40; 1 Sam. 15: 24-35.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 44; Matt. 15: 21-28.
<i>Sun.</i>	v. 45; 1 Sam. 7: 5-14.

EXPLANATIONS.—(36.) **evening sacrifice**, or 3 P. M., leaving five hours, to the day, of light; **all these things at thy word**, by divine direction. See v. 1. Compare Num. 16: 28. From Jas. 5:16 we learn that Elijah had prayed for a drought, and, again, also for rain, showing that our prayers and God's will are often conjoined. (37.) **turned their heart back**, as God is often known to do to his people. How wonderful is his mercy! Read Neh. 9:22-31. (38.) **Then the fire of the Lord fell**, as from a clear sky. It was therefore purely miraculous. Notice the completeness of the conflagration—sacrifice, wood, stones, dust, water in the trench, all disappear, leaving the whole place bare. "God does nothing by halves." (39.) **saw it**—*i. e.*, the descending and consuming fire; **they said**, compare v. 21. (40.) **And Elijah said**. He was now the ruler of the nation, whose word was law. "*The wheel had come full cycle round.*" **Take the prophets of Baal**, let persecutors be victims. Show your convictions by your righteous acts. Mercy to the criminal is cruelty to the innocent. **Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there**, aided, doubtless, by others; still, he may have slain some, as Samuel did Agag. 1 Sam. 15:33. It is thought to have been in memory of this terrible slaughter that Kishon received its modern name, *Nahr-el-Mukatta*, or "River of Slaughter." Elijah's act was justified by the express command of the law requiring idolatrous priests to be put to death. Deut. 13:6, 13, 15. (41.) **Get thee up**, Ahab had gone down the hill, now is bidden to ascend it again, to the feast following upon a sacrifice; **sound of abundance**, "sound of noise" of a rain, possibly a mysterious intimation in the prophet's ears, a fore-running Amen to his own desire. (42.) **put his face between his knees**, "the unusualness of the attitude showing the stress of his prayer." Ahab eats; Elijah prays. (43.) **to his servant**, tradition says he was the son of the widow of Sarepta; **Go up**, to the highest point of all. (45.) **went to Jezreel**, sixteen miles east. (46.) **to the entrance of Jezreel**, with supernatural bodily powers, exercising this caution at the entrance, possibly, "to learn what Jezebel would say or do, for she really governed the country."

QUESTIONS.

General Questions.—Where, in our last lesson, did we leave the sacrifice of the priests of Baal? We saw *them* wild; how

are we now to see Elijah? What preliminary steps does he take in preparing his sacrifice? What altar does he repair? Why does he take twelve stones with which to do it? Why does he put water on the sacrifice? Why three times?

Questions on Lesson.—

- V. 36. What was the time for the evening sacrifice? Name one or two contrasts between the cries of the priests and the prayers of Elijah. How does Elijah show that the honor of God is his chief desire? What were the four specific requests in Elijah's prayer? Were his prayers in harmony with God's will? Jas. 5:16. What is effectual, fervent prayer? See examples, 1 Sam. 7:9-12; 2 Kings 22:19, 20; Acts 4:31.
- V. 37. Why does Elijah wish the people to know that God had turned their hearts back? For what is God's mercy remarkable? Ps. 106:1. Will God's mercy, however, clear the guilty? Ex. 34:6, 7. What alone cleanses from sin? 1 John 1:7.
- V. 38. Was it lightning that set the sacrifice on fire? What was it? What, then, is this fire to be called? Ans. *Unquestionably miraculous*. How complete was the conflagration? Why?
- V. 39. What was the effect on the people? They now have a voice; to what question had they been dumb? Had God given no testimonials of himself before? Will this one serve Israel very long? Why not? Do any of the priests of Baal give glory now to God?
- V. 40. Why was it not cruelty thus to slay these prophets? Deut. 13:6, 9. What is the modern name of Kishon?
- V. 41. Why this command, "Get thee up, eat and drink"? What intimation is now given to Elijah? How long has the drought continued?
- V. 42. What is to be learned from Elijah's attitude in prayer?
- V. 43. Are God's treasures opened at our first knocking? Why not?
- V. 44. When churches see the "little cloud" of God's blessing, what should they do? Compare 2 Sam. 5:24.
- V. 45. How far away was Jezreel? How could Elijah not only keep up with but run before Ahab's swift chariot? Why did he not enter Jezreel? In all this is there any evidence that Ahab's heart is changed?

Reflection.—"If six times the answer should be, 'There is nothing;' yet wait on. The seventh time, which is the proper time, and the Lord's time, will give the answer you need."—*Krummacher*.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The God that answereth by fire, let him be God."—1 KINGS 18:24.

Some call

Feb. 25.]

LESSON VIII.

ELIJAH AT HOREB.—1 Kings 19:8-18. B. C. 906.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 8-12.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

9 ¶ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria:

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint *to be* king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18 Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

The Change in Elijah.—Elijah was a man "subject to like passions as we are," hence his great reverses of feeling. "But yesterday he was a conqueror, in the full glory of an unprecedented triumph, imposing his will as law on king and people. To-day he is an outcast, a fugitive, broken down in spirit, and only anxious to place the greatest possible distance between himself and his enemies.

What had produced this extraordinary change? Not Jezebel's threat alone, but, in part perhaps, physical reaction from the over-excitement of the preceding day; in part, possibly, internal disquietude; the weakness of "many a devout heart and gifted mind when the world has turned against them; when their words and deeds have been misinterpreted; when they have struggled in vain against the wickedness of mankind." And this is Elijah, the great reformer of Israel! the chief of the prophets! the one of rank with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration! the one apostles celebrate for effectual and fervent prayer! The prophets of Baal are dead by the river Kishon! Ahab is cowed! Only Jezebel remains undaunted. Her vow it is—kindred to the vow of Jephthah (Judges 11:30, 31); to the vow of Saul (2 Sam. 15:8); to the vow of Hannibal at nine years of age, when he was made to swear by his father, Hamilcar, eternal hostility to Rome—that dismays Elijah. v. 2. It is the crisis in his life. Yet it will lead on to personal experiences and to divine comforts and revelation of truth, that are written not only for Elijah's sake, but for ours. It will bring the old dispensation into contrast with the new, that hastens on. It will teach God's people in no age to despair in the constant thought of *his hidden church*; since

"All along the church's sky
Stars are scattered, pure and high;
Israel yet hath thousands sealed,
Who to Baal never kneeled."

ANALYSIS.

- I. Elijah at Horeb, v. 8.
- II. His despair, vs. 9, 10.
- III. Hears "a still small voice," vs. 11, 12.
- IV. The Lord speaks to him, vs. 13, 14.
- V. Gives new commands, vs. 15-17.
- VI. "Seven thousand" left, v. 18.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon. 1 Kings 19:8-18.
Tues. v. 8; Matt. 3:1-11.
Wed. v. 11; Ex. 34:1-8.
Thurs. v. 12; Luke 9:48-56.
Fri. v. 15; 2 Kgs. 8:8-15.
Sat. v. 16; Ps. 75.
SUN. v. 18; Rom. 11:1-7.

EXPLANATIONS.—(8.) **he arose**—*i. e.*, from under the juniper tree, v. 4. He had stopped first at Beersheba, ninety-five miles south-west from Jezreel, thence he went into the wilderness a day's journey, twenty-five or thirty-three miles, so as to be completely out of the territory of Israel, if not of Judah. **forty days**, see Ex. 34:28; Matt. 4:2; **unto Horeb**, a distance of about one hundred and seventy-five miles; in all, from Jezreel, about three hundred miles. Elijah wandered most of this time, probably, in the wilderness. It was the first return of an Israelite to Horeb since the days of Moses. **the mount of God**, so called from its sacred associations. (9.) **unto a cave**, literally "*the cave*," a well-known cave being intended, just where is unknown. Tradition has fixed it just below the highest summit of Jebel Mousa,

but this is unreliable. **came to him**, probably in night-vision; **have been very jealous**, it is often, yea always, well to be jealous for the honor of God; but this extreme interest sometimes has a reverse, as in Elijah's case, in deep despair. (10.) **I only am left**, hardly true. See 1 Kings 18: 4. Possibly Elijah meant the only one on the field of battle. (11.) **Go forth**, out of the cave, and out of despair; **before the Lord**, compare Ex. 33: 21-23; **And behold the Lord passed by**, the historian takes it for granted that Elijah will do as commanded. Then there came a hurricane by him, "but *Jehovah* was not in the wind;" an earthquake shook the mountain, "but *Jehovah* was not in the earthquake;" the hills flamed with fire, "but *Jehovah* was not in the fire." "And then, in the deep stillness of the desert air—unbroken by falling stream, or note of bird, or tramp of beast, or cry of man—came the whisper of a voice as of a gentle breath, a voice almost as small as silence itself." Then Elijah knew that the moment of divine revelation to his sense had come. It was evangelical truth in anticipation—a prophecy of that gospel that whispers in the silence of human life—that is more powerful than fierceness or vengeance, hurricane, earthquake, or fire. It is a type of that kingdom that is not of this world, whose weapons are not carnal, but spiritual. Will Elijah heed the parable? No. He reiterates his complaint (v. 14), and is then, not reproved, but commissioned to new duties. (15.) **anoint Hazael**, who shall punish Israel for idolatry. (16.) **Jehu**, who shall destroy the house of Ahab; **Elisha**, who shall help Elijah while on earth and after his translation carry on his work. See 2 Kings 8: 7-15; 9: 1-3; 1 Kings 19: 19-21. (18.) **seven thousand**, signifying an indefinite number. "He that could have more will have some." Rom. 11: 4, 5.

QUESTIONS.

On the Change in Elijah.—In what character did we see Elijah in our last lesson? What change has come over him? How do you account for it? Who was the personal cause of it? v. 2. But for Elijah's loss of faith, might not Jezebel have been reformed? Might not Israel? To what, however, did Elijah's despair providentially lead on? How do the examples of human nature in the Bible differ from such examples in fiction?
Ans. In their truthfulness to human nature.

On the Lesson.—

V. 8. In departing from Jezreel, to what place did Elijah go?

Where was this place? How far from Jezreel? Where did he go next? How far was this from Beersheba? Who had been miraculously fed for forty days before him? Where? Who after him? Where? How far is Horeb from Jezreel? Why go to Horeb at all?

V. 9. In what ways that you can think of did God speak to men in Bible times? What was the object of the question in this verse?

V. 10. What is the difference between jealousy for God and jealousy as between man and man? In which sense are you jealous? In what sense are the words "I only am left" hardly true? What man had saved one hundred prophets? How did this complaint, however, seem true to Elijah? Of whom should we chiefly take heed? 1 Cor. 10:12.

V. 11. In what three things does the narrative proceed to say "*Jehovah* was not"? In what one thing does it plainly infer that he was? Why not in either one of the three? Why was he in the "still small voice"? How is all this designed to help Elijah? Of what dispensation is it typical? Which is the more convincing of sin, a tempest of judgment or a soft gale of the Spirit of God? See John 16:8. What was the effect of judgment upon Pharaoh? Upon Jezebel?

V. 15. What was Hazael to do? What Jehu? What Elisha?

V. 18. Were there ever any dark times when God was without a witness? When we die, will either wisdom, goodness, or truth die with us? What is a good song for all when cast down? Ps. 42:5. If any too confidently boast, what may we say to them? Matt. 26:41.

"Ah! tell them they are men."

The Still Small Voice.

"The storm is o'er; and hark! a still small voice
Steals on the ear to say *Jehovah's* choice
Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul:

By soft, meek, tender ways he loves to draw

The sinner, startled by his ways of awe:

Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll."—*Keble.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me."—JOB 23:6.

March 4.]

LESSON IX.

THE STORY OF NABOTH.—1 Kings 21:4-14. B. C. 899.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 7-10.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money: or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

Historical Connection.—After the events at Mount Carmel, Ahab shows little or no sign of reformation: still, God continues his favor; gives him victory in successive Syrian wars. (See most interesting account of which in 1 Kings 20.) Yet this does not restore his faith in God. To his conquered enemies he exhibits criminal weakness: he fails to obtain the security of the Holy Land; nevertheless, he is uneasy and covetous in the sight of a neighbor's vineyard. Failing to obtain it by fair means, he obtains it by foul, but

at a great cost; for the doom that fell not upon his house for its fearful idolatries, nor for its persecutions of the prophets of the Lord, ensued in consequence of this act of injustice done to Naboth, an individual and a private citizen. Naboth, however, is no sooner dead than Ahab goes into Naboth's vineyard to claim it as his own, there to see a solitary figure standing before him. "*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*" utters the terrified king. "*I have found thee,*" answered the prophet. It was Elijah. He comes we know not whence. Well has it been called a scene "grander than any Grecian tragedy." Whereupon vengeance is denounced upon Ahab, and equally upon Jezebel, in most terrific words.

Ownership of the Hebrew Soil.—In the division of the national domain, Moses ordered that "every one of the 600,000 free citizens of the Hebrew race should have an equally solid and lasting part of it (Num. 33:54); to render which permanence sure the tenure, or right of holding, was made inalienable, and the estates so settled upon each family were to pass down by an indelible entail, or legal descent, in perpetual succession." Lev. 25:23. In this Mosaic law there was great wisdom. It equalized the distribution of property. The few could not revel in immense fortunes while the many were poor. The government watched over all and cared for all alike. The rich could not accumulate all the lands. The law was made to guard the rights of Naboth and to check the covetousness of Ahab. Let none talk lightly, therefore, of the Hebrew commonwealth, for in its letter and form it was the forerunner of the republics of the world.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Ahab ill-tempered, v. 4.
- II. Jezebel chides him, vs. 5, 6.
- III. Her plot to slay Naboth, vs. 7-10.
- IV. Her plot carried out, vs. 11-14.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon. 1 Kings 21:1-14.
- Tues. v. 4; Lev. 25:17-28.
- Wed. v. 5; Luke 12:13-31.
- Thurs. v. 9; 2 Chr. 20:1-12.
- Fri. v. 10; Deut. 17:6-13.
- Sat. v. 13; Gen. 9:1-17.
- SUN. v. 14; 2 Kgs. 9:30-37.

EXPLANATIONS.—(4.) **And Ahab**, for what he had been about (see vs. 1-3); strangely left out of the lesson as assigned. Jezreel, the scene of the lesson, is on the heights which form the western extremity of Mount Gilboa. Here was Ahab's summer palace. Samaria, the place of his court, where Naboth was probably tried, was south-west from Jezreel about twenty miles. (5.) **Why is thy spirit so sad?** his childish fretfulness may have been designed in part to move the regard of his wife. (6.) **he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard**, see v. 3, where Naboth objects to the king's proposal *as wrong*, by the law forbidding the alienation of landed property. Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 36:7.

See note on *Ownership of Soil*. (7.) **Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel**, and canst thou not find a way to accomplish thy purpose? On this theory it is that "Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law."—*Goldsmith*. **I will give thee the vineyard**, here Jezebel's *I* is emphatic. She was to Ahab what Lady Macbeth was to Macbeth—"Infirm of purpose! give *me* the daggers." (9.) **Proclaim a fast**, she steals the "livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in;" with an air of piety makes use of the religion of Israel. Oh what depth of villainy! "There is no wickedness so great but religion has sometimes been made a cover for it." **set Naboth on high**, not for honor, but for trial before a court. (10.) **sons of Belial**—*i. e.* "worthless persons," for witnesses (Num. 35:30); **against God and the king**, each offence punishable by death. Lev. 24:16; 2 Sam. 16:9. (11.) **did as Jezebel had sent unto them**, yet were no less guilty for being accomplices with Jezebel. It implies a deep moral degradation, however, among the Israelites. (13.) **and stoned him**, and his sons also, that there might be no avenger. 2 Kings 9:26.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—Was Ahab reformed by the results at Carmel? How did God continue to show his favor? How did Ahab treat the conquered Syrians? If merciful to men *outside* of his country, how does he appear *in* his country? For what is his house doomed? Who pronounces this doom? Where?

On Ownership of the Hebrew Soil.—How was the domain of the Hebrews divided by the order of Moses? How was the right of holding land for ever secured? What were the evidences of wisdom in this law? Of what was the Hebrew commonwealth the forerunner?

On the Lesson.—

- V. 4. What had Ahab desired? What commandment had he thereby broken? Ex. 20:17. What is a greater cause of covetousness than an excess of wealth? In what estimate does God hold covetousness? Ps. 10:3; 1 Cor. 6:10; Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5. Where was Naboth's vineyard? Where Jezreel? Where Samaria? How far were they apart?
- V. 5. What physician did Satan send to Ahab? How much does Satan help a man in his sin?
- V. 7. How does Jezebel show herself to be godless and lawless? What does she say *she* will do? Is man's wit more or less fertile than woman's in devising wicked-

- ness? Which is the more deplorable in this lesson, Ahab's silly weakness or Jezebel's wicked lawlessness?
- V. 8. Will you now describe the plot of Jezebel in obtaining Naboth's vineyard? How much real religion is there in the fact she proclaims? What livery does she steal? Was this the last theft of its kind?
- V. 10. What was the charge gravely brought against Naboth? How was it, if true, punishable?
- V. 11. What have you to say of these accomplices in this murder?
- V. 13. Who besides Naboth were stoned to death? Why?
- V. 14. Who in this lesson dies as a martyr? Who live, as yet, as murderers? Will not the blood they have shed be avenged? 2 Kings 9: 30-37.

Warning, as from Ahab.—"Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."—1 KINGS 21:20.

March 11.] LESSON X.

ELIJAH TRANSLATED.—2 Kings 2: 1-12. B. C. 896.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 8-12.

1 And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said *unto him*, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

3 And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will

take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the Lord liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 ¶ And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

Elijah's Ascension.—We now come to one of the grandest scenes of the Bible, the sublimity of which it is hardly possible for any superlatives to exaggerate. We bespeak for it a most careful study, since every nation, however barbarous, has endeavored to pierce the veil that conceals from us the invisible world and a future state. Cyrus had no knowledge of anything better than the present life, though he said, "I cannot imagine that the soul lives only while it remains in this mortal body." Socrates, when about to die, said, "We part; I am going to die, and you to live. Which of us goes the better way is known to God alone." Writing upon the future state, Cicero said, "Upon this subject I entertain no more than conjectures." But the Bible is full of intelligence respecting the future world. The Bible confirms its translations by transfiguration scenes, in which the spirits of the departed mingle with the living. The Bible tells us of many mansions, and bids the suffering ones of earth, in the sure hope of eternal glory, exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The Bible brings life and immortality to light through Jesus Christ. But more closely to our lesson. The prophet of the Lord has done his work; has bravely withstood the prophets of Baal; has made drought, and famine, and rain, and fire, repeatedly serve him in defence of Jehovah. But the scenes of Carmel on the west, and of Horeb on the south, and of Sarepta on the north, are passed. The feet of Elijah are now and for the last time turned to the east, beyond Jordan, to the land of his birth and the home of his childhood. His work-day of toil and storm is over, and he enters upon his evening-time of rest. Like the mariner in sight of the haven of his destination, he joyfully makes ready "to strike his topmasts and to take in his sails." The waters of the Jordan divide before him, and, lo! a chariot of fire and horses of fire stand ready to take him away.

ANALYSIS

DAILY READINGS.

- I. Elisha following Elijah, vs. 1-6.
 II. Elijah dividing the Jordan, vs.
 7, 8.
 III. Elisha's request, vs. 9, 10.
 IV. Elijah's ascension, vs. 11, 12.

Mon. 2 Kings 2 : 1-12.
Tues. 2 Kings 1 : 1-17.
Wed. v. 1 ; 1 Kings 19 : 15-21.
Thurs. v. 2 ; Gen. 32 : 21-32.
Fri. v. 3 ; 1 Sam. 19 : 9-24.
Sat. v. 9 ; John 14 : 9-14.
Sun. v. 12 ; Matt. 17 : 1-13.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **It came to pass**, so the events pass on, the last time Elijah was seen being at Carmel. See ch. 1 : 1-17. **That Elijah went**, by divine revelation; **from Gilgal**, not the Gilgal near Jericho, but the Gilgal probably nearer the Mediterranean, just west of Mount Ephraim. The course of the two men is eastward at every stage—*Gilgal, Beth-el, Jericho, Jordan*. (2.) **Tarry here, I pray thee**, Elijah wished possibly to be alone with his own thoughts, since “solitude is sometimes best society.” He may have wished opportunity for reflection, for confession, and also for thanksgiving; **I will not leave thee**, Milman seems to be in error when he calls this disobedience; if so, Jacob was disobedient (Gen. 32 : 26), Ruth also. Ruth 1 : 16. This reply shows, on the contrary, Elisha's determination to abide by his master in a subordinate capacity until he is promoted by Elijah's departure to a higher office; **so they went to Beth-el**, as directed by the Lord. (3.) **sons of the prophets**, pious, intelligent, studious young men gathered here and there in companies or educational centres, four of which centres or seminaries are mentioned in the Old Testament—at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam 10 : 5, 10); at Ramah, where Samuel himself is overseer of the school (1 Sam. 19 : 18-24); at Beth-el and at Jericho, as in this lesson. Let none, therefore, deprecate educational centres; these were the brightest spots in Israel's degenerate times. To these sons of the prophets at Beth-el and at Jericho a special revelation of Elijah's departure seems to have been given. (4.) **Tarry here**, Elijah repeats his request; **sent me to Jericho**, or so he is directed. Elisha again refuses, as he does, indeed, a third time, whereupon Elijah yields. The great things God does for his church are not to be done in a corner; they must have witnesses; it was so with Christ's transfiguration, resur-

rection, ascension. (7.) **and fifty men**, from the school in Jericho; **went**—*i. e.*, on the way to the Jordan; **stood to view afar off**, on some eminence sloping down to the river. (8.) **took his mantle**, not forgetting Moses' rod at the sea (Ex. 14: 16); **were divided**, what a spectacle! (9.) **ask what I shall do for thee**, a great word; **a double portion**—*i. e.*, an abundance, not *twice* as much (as is commonly understood), not "*two-thirds*," as Stanley limits it, but a large supply. (10.) **a hard thing**, no common favor; **nevertheless, if thou see me**, all spiritual attainments of value are conditioned. John 7: 17; Matt. 24: 13. (11.) **went on and talked**, of things past and things to come. Wonderful talk! **behold!** now Elijah is here, now gone; **a chariot of fire and horses of fire**, the ministry of angels appearing in these glorious forms; **by a whirlwind**, fully in keeping with the energy of fire and whirlwind that had characterized his life; **to heaven**, not Paradise, but the visible sky; into this Elijah was seen to enter: "all beyond was the realm of *faith*." (12.) **And he cried, My father**, rightly regarding Elijah's courage, watchfulness, prayers, and divine gifts as a better defence to Israel than chariots and horsemen.

QUESTIONS.

General questions.—What has every nation endeavored to do, and failed? In proof of this give the sayings of Cyrus, Socrates, and Cicero. How does the Bible differ from these doubts? What is to you the strongest proof that there is a future life? State in review some of the places where we have seen Elijah in our Old Testament study. Give your idea of his character.

Questions on Lesson.—

- V. 1. Where was Elijah last seen? 2 Kings 1. What severe work did he perform again at Carmel? When it was made known to him that he was to be taken from earth, in what direction did he move? Why? With whom? Where was Gilgal?
- V. 2. Why did Elijah bid Elisha to tarry at Gilgal? Why did Elisha refuse to do so? How many times after this were this request and refusal repeated? Who resembled Elisha in this refusal?
- V. 3. Who were these sons of the prophets? Where were they assembled? Of how many such schools have we a scriptural record? Why was sacred learning then a power for good? Why is it now?
- V. 6. Why are the great things God does for his church not

done in secret? Give examples of these great things done openly.

V. 7. Why did these fifty men go as far as they did toward the Jordan? Why no farther?

V. 8. When were the waters of the Jordan divided before?

V. 9. What has Jesus bidden us to do? John 14:13. Did Elisha ask for just double the spirit and power of Elijah? If not, for what? What does this indicate respecting Elisha's character?

V. 10. How are all spiritual attainments conditioned?

V. 11. How was Elijah parted from Elisha? How taken up into heaven? What is meant here by heaven?

V. 12. Why this cry of Elisha? Where do we hear of Elijah again? Matt. 17:1-13. Was not Elijah, then, conscious after death?

GOLDEN TEXT.

“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”—GEN. 5:24.



March 18.] LESSON XI.

THE SPIRIT OF ELISHA.—2 Kings 2:13-25. B. C. 896.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 18-22.

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16 ¶ And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said,

Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him (for he tarried at Jericho), he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19 ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

23 ¶ And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

Character of Elisha.—This, as differing from Elijah's, is indicated in the name Elisha. Elijah means "*my God is Jehovah*;" and as if conscious of this, Elijah acted with awful might and severity: but Elisha means, "*God is salvation*"—i. e., "one who saves." Hence, while Elijah is known as a slayer and destroyer of whatever opposed or interfered with the rights of Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, Elisha who comes after him, is known, not as a destroyer, but as a healer. Of Elijah's parentage and birthplace we know nothing: Elisha was the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, near the plain of Jezreel. 1 Kings 19: 16, 19. Elijah was a man of the mountains, a real Bedouin of the desert; Elisha dwelt in cities, as in the present lesson he abides in Jericho (v. 18); thence he passed to Samaria (v. 25); he lived "indoors," "houses," as an inhabitant of civilized life. See ch. 5: 3; 6: 32; 6: 13. In contrast with Elijah's disordered locks, his hair was worn trimmed behind. See note on v. 23. He used a walking-staff, of the kind usually carried by grave or aged citizens, ch. 4: 29. There is no hint of his ever wearing Elijah's mantle. "Close as was the succession" (as Stanley says in his sketch of Elisha, which Dr. Hackett speaks of as "one of surpassing interest"), "it was a succession, not of likeness, but of contrast. What was begun by Elijah in fire and storm, in solitude and awful visions, must be carried on through winning arts and healing acts and gentle words of peaceful and social intercourse; not in the desert of Horeb or on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, by the rushing waters of Jordan."

ANALYSIS.

- I. The return to Jericho, vs. 13-15.
- II. The search for Elijah, vs. 16-18.
- III. The waters of Jericho healed, vs. 19-22.
- IV. The children and the bears, vs. 23-25.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	2 Kings 2 : 13-25.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 13; Ps. 102 : 12-28.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 19; Josh. 5 : 12-27.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 21; Matt. 15 : 7-20.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 23; Gen. 28 : 10-22.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 23; Job 30 : 1-15.
<i>Sun.</i>	v. 24; Prov. 22 : 6-16.

EXPLANATIONS.—(13.) **He took up also the mantle**, see 1 Kings 19 : 19. (14.) **and smote the waters**, if the waters divided, it would assure him that he, even as Elijah, had miraculous power. **Where is the Lord God of Elijah?** an expression of firm conviction that by this miracle now about to be wrought his prophetic succession would be known. So it was recognized at once by the prophets who saw it performed. See next verse. (15.) **Which were to view at Jericho**, or from Jericho, not yet having returned from the place where they “stood to view afar off.” See v. 7. These prophets greeted Elisha on his ascent from the valley of the Jordan, and said, “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.” The divided waters of the Jordan have proved it. (16.) **lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up**, as indeed Elijah had been often taken about by extraordinary supernatural power. They had not seen the ascension, and hence doubted a little whether he was gone away for ever. Elisha remonstrated at first, but at last complied, telling them what the result of the search would be. (19.) **is pleasant**, though not as it was of old (see 1 Kings 16 : 34); **water is naught**, unpalatable. (20.) **new cruse**, not a globular vessel, but probably a flat metal saucer, or dish, still common in the East. (21.) **and cast the salt in there**, the action being symbolical, the power being wholly in the word of the Lord. (23.) **from thence unto Beth-el**, about a day’s journey to the north-west, the way leading past Ai. Beth-el, it will be remembered, was one of the seats of the calf-worship of Jeroboam. 1 Kings 12 : 28, 29. It is not strange, therefore, that the children of such idolaters should be lacking in good manners; **little children**, not small children as seen in pictures, but infidel youths, heady young men; **go up**,

thou bald head, literally, "round head," a peculiar Hebrew term for shortness of hair at the back of the head. Future painters will please not paint Elisha with forehead bald! (See Smith's *Dict.*, p. 716, note.) "Go up" was hardly a scoff at the ascent of Elijah. **(24.) came forth two she bears**, they were not uncommon in the time of Amos, who resided near Beth-el. Amos 5:19; **cursed them**, for once exercising the spirit of Elijah. It was, however, exceptional, though justly deserved. Stanley goes farther than he should go in saying "that the act was contrary to the spirit of the gospel."

QUESTIONS.

On the character of Elisha.—What is the meaning of the name "Elijah"? Of "Elisha"? How is Elisha's character, as differing from Elijah's, indicated by his name? There were strong contrasts between these two men of God; will you state some of them? How was Elijah greater than Elisha? How was he less?

On the Lesson.—

- V. 13. When was this mantle first cast upon Elisha? Why does Elisha now take it up? What evidence have we that Elisha afterward ever wore it? Why not?
- V. 14. What evidence is there in this verse that Elisha had Elijah's spirit, as well as his garment? What does the inquiry, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" indicate? Who saw this miracle performed?
- V. 15. How do these "sons of the prophets" show their recognition of Elisha as Elijah's successor? Why should we rejoice in other people's spiritual gifts? Rom. 12:10. Will the succession of the gifted sons of God ever be destroyed by sin?
- V. 16. Why this search for Elijah? How long was it continued? With what result? What makes it best sometimes to let men have their own way? Where was Elisha tarrying at this time?
- V. 19. How did the prophets in Jericho make good use of Elisha while they had him? What judgment had God fulfilled in the region of Jericho? Ps. 107:33, 34.
- V. 20. Why did Elisha ask for anything? Why for a cruse? Why new? Why for salt? Ans. *As God will not bind his power to means, so will he, by means unlikely as these, perform his will.*
- V. 21. Why go to the spring of the waters instead of to the channel? What does reformation amount to if it leaves the spring-head of the heart uncleansed? Matt. 15:18, 19. What, then, should be every one's prayer? Ps. 51:10. Is it your prayer?

V. 23. Where was Beth-el? By whom was it honored? Gen. 28:10-22. By whom dishonored? 1 Kings 12:28, 29. What happened to Elisha on entering Beth-el? How was the hair of Elisha's head different from Elijah's? Is there any evidence that Elisha was bald? Who were these little children? Is it known how many there were in all? How many were torn to pieces? How? Why does ungodliness make men irreverent? Are not children sometimes blamed for manners learned at home?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"They said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."—2 KINGS 2:15.

March 25.] LESSON XII.

FIRST QUARTER REVIEW. 1877.

B. C. 975-896.

Note.—(I.) The *Daily Readings* for this lesson cover the prophecy of Micah, containing as it does, by a happy coincidence, just seven chapters. Besides, the minor prophets will never be more readily appreciated than in connection with the study of the history of either one or both of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Their reading will be most fitting the present year. (II.) This Review Lesson is thrown into two grades of questions for the older and for the younger classes. Of course they will need to be studied prior to the Sunday-school hour, as there is no special profit in always providing answers to questions at sight. After some experience in the preparation of reviews, the conclusion has been reached that those are preferable that simply test the degree of fidelity with which the lessons of the quarter have been studied and mastered. Between such prefatory and concluding exercises, therefore, as superintendents may conduct, it is hoped the consideration of the following questions will be found to be profitable.—G. S. A.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon.	Micah 1.	Thurs.	Micah 4.
Tues.	" 2.	Fri.	" 3.
Wed.	" 3.	Sat.	" 6.
Sun. Micah 7.			

QUESTIONS FOR THE OLDER CLASSES.

What was the first form of government under which the Jews as a nation lived? What form did they afterward seek? How did these two differ from each other? How was the monarchical subordinate to the theocratic? Through what period did the theocratic continue? What three kings reigned during the undivided monarchy? After the death of whom did the undivided monarchy break up? Who had then come to the throne of Judah? To what place did he go to be inaugurated? Why? For what reason did the ten tribes rebel against him? With what success? What was the controlling tribe of Israel? What was the great sin of Jeroboam? What were his reasons for committing it? Is expediency ever to be a guide to a Christian's life? How did Ahab sin even more wickedly than Jeroboam? What was Baal-worship? What the worship of Ashtoreth? What was one of the penalties of the Mosaic law in the event of national apostasy from God? Who denounced this penalty upon Ahab? By what means did Ahab search for Elijah during the drought? By what great test did Elijah show the impotence of all the priests of Baal? What is the difference between Elijah's character at Mount Carmel and at Mount Horeb? By what injustice to a private citizen does Ahab draw on his doom? Where was the city of Samaria? The city of Jezreel? From what mountain and past what towns did Elijah travel to the scene of his ascension? What man was his companion? Will you describe the scene of Elijah's ascension? What is proof that Elijah's spirit was conscious after its removal from earth? What is proof that departed spirits know and commune with each other? Will you describe Elijah's personality as differing from that of Elisha? In what increasingly sinful light have we seen the kings and the kingdom of Israel? In what have we seen the mercy of God wonderfully displayed? Has Israel as yet had one good king?

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGER CLASSES.

Who was Solomon's successor? What counsel did he reject? Into how many kingdoms were the Jews then divided? Which was the northern? Which the southern? Which the larger? What tribe ruled Israel? Who was its first king? What sin did he introduce into his kingdom? Who had made a "golden calf" before Jeroboam? Who was Ahab's Canaanite wife? What was her native country? Who was the god of Jezebel? How did she treat the prophets of the Lord? What prophet of vengeance was sent by God to the court of Ahab? To predict what terrible calamity? How long did it last? Where in the mean time was Elijah to be found? Why did Elijah summon Ahab and the priests of Baal to Mount Carmel? What was the test between Elijah and them? Who won the day? What blessing fell upon the land that very evening? Where have we seen a gloomy mood upon Elijah?

On his way to what mountain? Did he hear God's voice at Horeb in the wind, earthquake, fire, or what? What does the "still small voice" teach us? How does the Holy Spirit speak? How does afflictive Providence speak? Who was Elijah's successor? What was the name of his father? What was Elisha doing when Elijah first saw him? Did Elijah die as we die? If not, how was he taken from earth? What was the Golden Text about Enoch? Name some of the bad men we have studied about during the quarter. Some of their bad deeds. What was the story about Naboth? What about the mocking children? Where have we left Elisha? What new truths have we learned about sin? About God's justice? About his goodness?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But God is judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."—Ps. 75:7.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

SECOND QUARTER.

April 1.]

LESSON I.

THE OIL INCREASED.—2 Kings 4:1-7. B. C. 895.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 1-7.

1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead: and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me: what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her, and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel: and he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more.* And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Introductory Notes.—I. *The Ministry of Elisha.* The ministry of Elisha now opening before us continues from the present date for nearly three score years (B. C. 896-835). "His deeds were not of wild terror, but of gracious, soothing, homely beneficence, bound up with the ordinary tenor of human life. At his home in Carmel he is the oracle and support of the neighborhood." He predicts plenty instead of famine. 2 Kings 6:18-20; 7:1. He sweetens Jericho's bitter spring. He multiplies oil for the widow. He restores to workingmen their axe-heads. 2 Kings 6:5-7. He saves from deadly herbs. 2 Kings 4:38-44. He brings the child of his benefactress to life. 2 Kings 4:27-37. He dies in great old age, and "is not rapt away like Elijah, but buried with a splendid funeral." See Josephus, *Ant.* IX., 8, § 6. He was not Elijah, but Elisha; not a John the Baptist, nor a Luther, but a Melancthon, and, better still, like Christ—the gentle, beneficent, "holy man of God, who passeth by us continually." 2 Kings 4:9.

II. *The Sons of the Prophets.*—(v. 1) In Judah the sons of the proph-

ets are mostly in a scattered and isolated condition, but in Israel they have a compact organization, in which the most distinguished prophets stand forth as spiritual teachers and rulers, having numerous pupils, or "sons," under their inspection or control. This prophetic body, like the priests in Judah, acted as a counterpoise to the prevalent idolatry, which was far more deeply rooted and widely spread in Israel than in the southern kingdom.

ANALYSIS.	READINGS.
I. Poverty proclaimed, v. 1.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 4: 1-7.
II. Poverty enriched, vs. 2-6.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 1; Lev. 25: 35-55.
III. Instructions, v. 7.	<i>Wed.</i> Matt. 18: 21-35.
	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 4; Luke 8: 41-56.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 1; Ps. 27.
	<i>Sat.</i> v. 6; Jas. 1.
	<i>SUN.</i> v. 6; 2 Cor. 12: 1-10.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **Now**, this chapter contains "a collection of Elisha's private miracles—miracles of which individuals not named were the object;" **sons of the prophets** (see *Note II.*); **Thy servant my husband**, said by Jewish tradition to have been Elijah's friend Obadiah; **the creditor is come**, not while the debtor is alive, but on the event of his death the creditor could enforce his right over the service of the debtor's sons, to which he was by law entitled. "The law did not establish the custom of servitude for debt, but finding it established allowed it, and in allowing it, set limits to it. In other nations the debtor often sold himself, his children, and his grandchildren into hopeless slavery, but in the Jewish nation the debtor's power of pledging was confined within the bounds of the jubilee." Slavery under the law of Moses existed in greatly mitigated forms, doubtless with a view to its ultimate suppression. See Lev. 25: 35-55. (2.) **save a pot of oil**, or an "anointing of oil;" enough for one anointing of my person. Her husband, not being a man of business, but of a profession, and that in the interests of a religion now far from popular, left her with a scanty pittance for a livelihood. (3.) **borrow not a few**, scant not. (4.) **shut the door upon thee**, compare our Lord's conduct. Luke 8: 51-54; John 7: 3, 4; Acts 10: 41; Matt. 8: 4; 9: 30. (6.) **And the oil stayed**, the benevolent object for which the oil had been multiplied having been accomplished. (7.) **sell the oil and pay thy debt**, "none of the oil was

hers till her creditors were paid ; all was hers that remained ; while she had nothing it was no sin to be in debt ; but when her vessels were full, she was not guiltless until she had paid the last farthing of her indebtedness." To pay a few cents on a dollar and live in fine mansions and drive fine carriages is not Elisha's advice. His injunction was, "*Pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.*"

QUESTIONS.

On Notes.—How long does Elisha's ministry from this time continue? What was the character of his deeds? Who were the sons of the prophets? How do those belonging to Judah differ from those belonging to Israel?

On the Lesson.—

- V. 1. What kind of miracles have we in this chapter? What evidence have we that the Old Testament prophets did not regard themselves as too pure for the institution of marriage? What name has Jewish tradition given to the husband of this widow? By what law could her children be taken by another as servants? How was a debtor's power of pledging his own service or that of his family limited? Could a Jew enslave another Jew *absolutely*? How does this widow's experience prove the adage that "sorrows never come singly"? Why would a prophet be the more likely to be in want with Ahab and Jezebel recently on the throne? To whom is sorrow most safely told?
- V. 2. Why did Elisha ask the widow "what was in her house"? As far as we have any material substance, ought it not to go for payment of debts? Is it in any sense to a really good man a shame or a disgrace to be poor? Is it to a really good man a shame or a disgrace to be rich? Where is there shame as between poverty and riches? Are people ever liberal with other people's money? What better way is there to keep out of debt than to save *incomings* and to cut down *outgoings*?
- V. 4. Why was it right to keep the people from the sight of the miracle *in working* if they saw it when *once wrought*?
- V. 6. When did the multiplying of the oil cease? Does God give his grace in excess of the capacity of the recipient? He says his grace shall be sufficient for us ; why does he not say that it shall be *more* than sufficient?
- V. 7. Why did not this woman trust her unaided reason in disposing of her oil before consulting with Elisha? Would business men as often err if they consulted the word of God? Are they not likely to err without it? Why should men care first for their debts before they do for their abundance? Where would Elisha's counsel be applicable in these days?

Extract.—"Behold the true servant and successor of Elijah: what he did to the widow of Sarepta this one did to the widow of a prophet. That increase of oil was by degrees; this, at once; both equally miraculous; this so much more charitable as it less concerned himself."—*Bishop Hall.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you."—2 COR. 9:8.

April 8.] LESSON II.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.—2 Kings 4:25-37. B. C. 895.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 32-36.

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is that Shunammite*;

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her, and the Lord hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice nor hearing: wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

32 And when Elisha was come unto the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked into the house to and fro: and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

Note upon Shunem.—Shunem, the modern *Solam*, was on the south-west flank of the so-called “Little Hermon,” three miles north of Jezreel, five from Gilboa, in full view of the sacred spot of Elisha on Mount Carmel, and situated in the midst of the finest corn-fields in the world. Shunem is mentioned on two occasions: *First*, as the scene of the Philistines’ first encampment before the battle of Gilboa. 1 Sam. 28: 4. *Second*, as the scene of Elisha’s intercourse with the wealthy and hospitable Shunammite woman and her son. 2 Kings 4. It will be noticed that three of Elisha’s miracles, raising the dead to life, multiplying food (vs. 42-44), and healing the leper (ch. 5), foreshadow those of Christ. These miracles were wrought during the reign of Jehoram, the fame of which did not fail to strengthen the cause of true religion. The miracle studied in this lesson is most touching. The full narrative should be read.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. The interview at Mount Carmel, vs. 25-30.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 4: 8-37.
II. The return to Shunem, vs. 30-32.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 25; Jas. 5: 13-20.
III. The child raised to life, vs. 32-35.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 27; John 11: 32-52.
IV. The mother and child, vs. 36, 37.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 27; Mark 10: 13-31.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 34; 1 Kgs. 17: 17-24.
	<i>Sat.</i> vs. 21, 25; Matt. 15: 21-28.
	<i>Sun:</i> v. 37; Matt. 10: 34-42.

EXPLANATIONS.—(25.) **So she went . . . unto the man of God**, she had lost her son, but not her faith; **to Mount Carmel**, the nearest point of which is sixteen miles from Shunem; **the man of God saw her**, so the father saw the prodigal before the prodigal saw the father (Luke 15: 20); **said to Gehazi**, the servant or boy of Elisha, sent twice to this Shunammite (vs. 12, 13, 26); **Behold, yonder**, rather *Look*, that is the Shunammite. (26.) **run now**, as one apprehending some trouble; **she answered**—i. e., to Gehazi; **it is well**, an answer purposely brief and vague; she would disclose her grief to the prophet alone. (27.)

caught him by the feet, adding force to supplication, a practice to this day in the East. Compare Matt. 18 : 29 ; Mark 5 : 22 ; Luke 8 : 41 ; John 11 : 32. **Gehazi came near and thrust her away**, thinking her show of excessive grief an act of disrespect to Elisha. So the disciples would push away the mothers who came with children to Jesus. Mark 10 : 13 ; **the Lord hath hid it from me**, it is no sign of intelligence never to admit ignorance. (28.) **did I desire a son**, see v. 16. "Great grief shrinks from putting itself in words. She cannot bring herself to say, 'My son is dead,' but by reproaching the prophet with having 'deceived' her she indicates her loss." (29.) **if thou meet any man, salute him not**, as a salutation is itself a temptation to loiter ; **lay my staff upon**, "a much canvassed command." Perhaps its object was simply to assuage grief. (31.) **neither voice nor hearing**, rather, "*nor attention* ;" **the child is not awaked**—*i. e.*, from death, see vs. 20, 32. Death was often spoken of as sleep. 1 Kings 1 : 21. Compare Acts 7 : 60. (32.) **his bed**, not the child's bed, but Elisha's. (33.) **and prayed**, his staff had failed to open the gates of heaven, his prayers would not fail. Jas. 5 : 16. (34.) **he . . . lay upon the child**, prayer does not exclude the use of means. Elisha imitates Elijah (1 Kings 17 : 21), only prolonging the act, not working his miracle with the same rapidity as Elijah. "Miracles were for the most part performed instantaneously, but sometimes they advanced progressively toward completion." 1 Kings 18 : 44, 45 ; Mark 8 : 24, 25 ; **waxed warm**, warmth may have been given from the living to the dead body. (35.) **the child sneezed**, the first acts of restored respiration. (37.) **bowed herself**, discharging her duty of devout gratitude before the exercise of natural affection. Then

—"he was there, her beautiful, her own,
Living and smiling on her, with his arms
Folded about her neck, and his warm breath
Breathing upon her lips, and in her ear
The music of his gentle voice once more."—*N. P. Willis.*

QUESTIONS.

Questions on Note.—Where was Shunem ? What was the hospitality shown to Elisha there ? vs. 8-11. How was it repaid ? vs. 12-17. What miracles of Elisha foreshadowed similar ones by Christ ?

Questions on Lesson.—

- V. 25. How far from Shunem was the nearest point of Mount Carmel? Where on Mount Carmel was Elisha? v. 27. How was this journey taken? v. 24.
- V. 26. Why did the Shunammite woman answer Gehazi's inquiry with the words, "It is well"?
- V. 27. Why did this woman take Elisha by the feet? Where is the practice still observed? Why did Gehazi draw near to thrust the Shunammite mother away? What similar rudeness did Christ's disciples show? What was Elisha's command? When is it a sign of intelligence to confess ignorance? Do men know more, or less, as they grow old?
- V. 28. With what does this mother reproach Elisha? Why is the grief most painful that "treads upon the heels of pleasure"?
- V. 29. Why the command to salute no man? Why the command to lay the staff upon the face of the child? Did Elisha think his staff alone would work a miracle?
- V. 30. Why this double oath of the Shunammite woman? Compare 1 Kings 2 : 2, 4, 6.
- V. 31. When the Bible speaks of death as a "sleep," does it refer to the soul? Ans. *It shadows forth the sweet repose and peace of the dead, and "the fact that to us who are alive they are as if they were asleep." It was so with Christ and his apostles, "who used the word, not in the language of philosophy, but of common life."*
- V. 33. Why did Elisha pray?
- V. 34. Why stretch himself so closely upon the child? Whom did he imitate? Was the miracle performed instantaneously? Why not? Give other examples of progressive miracles. (See explanation on this verse.)
- V. 35. Why this allusion to the child's sneezing?
- V. 37. What act of the Shunammite mother precedes the exercise of her motherly affection? Whom are we to love before all things else? Matt. 10 : 37. What woman in gospel times, like this Shunammite, had great faith? (See Golden Text.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—MATT. 15: 28.

April 15.]

LESSON III.

NAAMAN THE LEPER.—2 Kings 5:1-14. B. C. 894.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 10-14.

1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *there-with* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 ¶ And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do* some great thing, wouldst thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God : and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Note on Leprosy.—The Egyptian and Syrian climates are very prolific in skin diseases, especially in rainless atmospheres. Our Western hospitals show a wide departure from the best known and recorded Oriental types. The predominant and characteristic form of leprosy in Scripture is a white variety, covering either the entire body or a large tract of its surface : such were the cases of *Moses, Miriam, Naaman, and Gehazi*. Ex. 4 : 6 ; Num. 12 : 10 ; 2 Kings 5 : 1, 27. The principal morbid features amongst the Levitical symptoms (Lev. 13 : 14) are a rising or swelling, a scab or baldness, and a bright or white spot, but especially a white swelling in the skin, with a change of the hair of the part from the natural black to white or yellow, or an appearance of a taint going deeper than the skin. The Hebrews regarded the disease as a living plague set in the man by the finger of God so long as it showed its activity by spreading, but when no more signs of life were shown it lost its character as a curse from him. Varieties of leprosy still originate in the modifying influence of circumstances, climate, region, or race of men.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Help needed, v. 1.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 5 : 1-14.
II. Help suggested, vs. 2-4.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 1 ; Num. 12.
III. Help sought, vs. 5-7.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 5 ; Esth. 6 : 7-14.
IV. Help offered, vs. 8-10.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 10 ; John 9 : 1-41.
V. Help rejected, vs. 11, 12.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 11 ; Luke 17 : 11-19.
VI. Help obtained, vs. 13, 14.	<i>Sat.</i> v. 12 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 18-31.
	<i>Sun.</i> v. 14 ; Josh. 6 : 3-20.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **honorable**, Heb., “lifted up,” or accepted ; in great favor ; **had given deliverance**, when some Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquest to Syria and Israel ; **but he was a leper**, greatness cannot secure from sickness or sadness. (2.) **had brought away . . . of Israel a little maid**. How far doth God fetch the means of accomplishing his purposes ! Naaman’s companies do their work of plunder in Israel, yet this is the predetermined way to Naaman’s spiritual as well as bodily healing. (3.) **And she said**, it is good to make our children acquainted with the works of God, with the praises of his prophets. “The remotest nations may light their candle at their coal.”—*Bishop Hall*. (5.) **Go to, go**—*i. e.*, do not delay ; **ten talents of silver**, \$16,560 ; **six thousand pieces of gold**, rather “*shekels*.” Coined money did not exist as yet, but the precious

metals were carried in bars, portions of which were cut when needed, the value of which was obtained by weighing. The Persian value of six thousand shekels of gold was \$34,185. **ten changes of raiment**, these were gifts of honor in the East. Gen. 41:42; 45:22; Esth. 6:8; Dan. 5:7. (6.) **behold, I have therewith sent Naaman**, the principal passage of the letter; **that thou mayest recover him**, the king of Syria presumes on this royal brother's service, if leprosy can be cured in Israel. (7.) **rent his clothes**, as if alarmed or terrified; **Am I God, to kill**, Jehoram does not think of Elisha; he imagines mischief, fraud, at the root of the whole matter. (8.) **Elisha the man of God**, see last chapter, vs. 7, 9, 16, 21; **let him know**, a keen reproach to Jehoram's forgetfulness. (9.) **with his horses**, all his attendants; **with his chariot**, in which he rode himself. (10.) **sent a messenger**, because of Naaman's self-importance (see v. 11); **Go and wash in Jordan seven times**, to test obedience, and the extent of it. Compare John 9:7. Obedience is the test of faith. See also 1 Kings 18:43. (11.) **was wroth**, because his own way was rejected. So have many sinners been since. **Behold, I thought**, that he would come out, according to the unwritten code of Eastern courtesy. Courtesy was not the question, however, just now. (12.) **Are not Abana (äb'a-na) and Pharpar**, the Barada and Awaaj; how he over-conceits his own rivers, not "waters," two rivers for one. Damascus, a stately city, with which the beggarly region of the Jordan was not to be compared. "No wonder the carnal mind despises the foolishness of preaching." (13.) **some great thing**, next to Elisha, Naaman may thank his servants. (14.) **seven times**, compare the seven compassings of Jericho; **and his flesh came again**, at the seventh plunge. Obedience, to be rewarded, must be exact.

QUESTIONS.

On Leprosy.—What climates are prolific in skin diseases? What were some of the symptoms of leprosy as known to the Jews? How did they regard it? By what are varieties of leprosy modified?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. How had Naaman, under God, been of service to Israel?
How had his greatness not saved him from sadness?
Does honor purchase health?
- V. 2. Where in these verses are to be seen the cross ways of

divine providence? Why is it the glory of God to conceal a thing? John 13: 7.

- V. 3. What hint have we of pious parental instruction? Are Sunday-schools designed to be a substitute for this? Are they not in danger of being so regarded?
- V. 4. This reporter was truthful; are all reporters?
- V. 5. Why do we find no one blaming the king's readiness to believe the maid? Can a thought of mercy ever be objectionable? See John 10: 33. Is it man's gift of silver and gold, or God's free gift of grace, that will save his soul? Rom. 3: 24; Rev. 21: 6; 22: 17; Eph. 2: 8; Isa. 55: 1.
- V. 7. Why does not the king think of Elisha at once? Do we not, like Jehoram, often misjudge other people's motives?
- V. 8. What occasion has Elisha to reproach Jehoram? If God's ministers are faithful, will they stand in fear of kings?
- V. 9. How does Naaman come to Elisha? Is a man any better for being self-important?

*"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gold for a' that."*

- V. 10. How many times did Israel go about Jericho? How many times did Elijah's servant pray for rain? Why must Naaman plunge seven times?
- V. 11. Why was Naaman wroth?
- V. 12. What reply does Naaman make? How is human nature still like Naaman's? What is more conceited than self-centring morality or culture?
- V. 13. What great thing would not men do to be saved? What great things do the heathen do? What the Mussulmans? What the Roman Catholics? What simple thing only must be done?
- V. 14. What must obedience be to be rewarded? How do the Gospels report this miracle? Luke 4: 27.

*"Leprous and proud as he,
To Jesus thus I came;
From sin he set me free
When I believed his name."—Newton.*

P. S.—Let the whole school, in closing, bow and recite the Golden Text.

GOLDEN TEXT.

*"Wash me, and I shall be whiter
than snow."—Ps. 51: 7.*

April 22.]

LESSON IV.

GEHAZI THE LEPER.—2 Kings 5:20-27. B. C. 894.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 25-27.

20 ¶ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is all well?*

22 And he said, All *is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there he come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him.

24 And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white as snow*.

Note.—The events immediately following Naaman's cure are of great interest. Naaman returns to Elisha convinced that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; then offers the presents which Eastern courtesy should have led him to do at the outset; in refusing which, Elisha is entreated to accept a gift of two mules' burden of earth, probably of the land of Israel; not a little superstition remaining in one whose religious convictions were so recent. Then Naaman utters a vow of perpetual fidelity to the God of Israel. A question of conscience, however, follows upon an act of civil service to the king of Syria, but not of personal religious character. It is significant to notice that the prophet leaves Naaman's convictions to work out their own effects. If men are true to God and Christ and his church, their conscientious scruples will quickly and readily adjust themselves. See vs. 15-19. Now follows Gehazi's sin and punishment—"an infliction not too severe for his crime. For it was not the covetousness alone that was punished, but at the same time the ill use made of the prophet's name to gain an object prompted by a

mean covetousness, and the attempt to conceal it by lying." A singularly sad, but apt, illustration of the Scripture saying,

"*He that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.*"—Prov. 28 : 20.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. A covetous eye, v. 20.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 5 : 15-19.
II. Covetous steps, v. 21.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 20; Ex. 20 : 1-17.
III. Covetous fraud, vs. 22-25.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 22; Act 5 : 1-11.
IV. Discovery and punishment, vs.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 22; 1 John 3 : 8-24.
26, 27.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 23; John 12 : 1-8.
	<i>Sat.</i> Gen. 13.
	<i>Sun.</i> Ps. 139.

EXPLANATIONS.—(20.) **said**—*i. e.*, to himself, with his eyes on the departing Syrian treasure (v. 5); **hath spared Naaman this Syrian**, words of contempt, as if no one need hesitate to *spoil a Syrian*; **but, as the Lord liveth**, bad men do not scruple to use solemn asseverations. Elisha and Gehazi! the one a man of God, the other contemptuous, covetous, profane. No examples, no counsels, no companions, prophets, nor ministers will prevail with some hearts. **I will run after him**, desire hastens his pace; **and take somewhat of him**, as if Elisha had been too simple, kind, neglectful of his own interests; *he* dares to be bold, wise, frugal. (21.) **he lighted down**, an uncalled-for courtesy, yet bestowed on a servant for his master's sake. He cannot humble himself enough to one of Elisha's family. True nobleness is often noticeably courteous. (22.) **And he said, All is well**, a sad falsehood, for Elisha was not at peace with cunning deception; **My master hath sent me**, this is false also, and grossly wicked. "Had he sought the fee of a prophet's servant, the offence would have been less; now reaching at a greater sum, he belies his master, robs Naaman, burdens his own soul." **there be come to me from mount Ephraim**, at Bethel and Gilgal there were seminaries of the prophets; **two young men of the sons of the prophets**, needing aid of scholarships, as we should say, worthy beneficiaries of education societies. How sound was this craft! **a talent of silver**, \$1656 (Osborn); a pretty large demand. What is *one*, says Gehazi, to the *ten* Naaman is taking back? (23.) **Be content**, or consent, please, take

two talents; **two of his servants**—*i. e.*, Naaman's. (24.) **to the tower**, or hill between Naaman and Elisha's house; **he**—*i. e.*, Gehazi, as if quite willing to bid them adieu here. (25.) **He went in**, as if he had not been away from his master, still adding deception to deception; **went no whither**, Heb. "not hither or thither." "O Gehazi, where didst thou think God was this while? Couldst thou hope to blind the eyes of a seer? Of what metal is the forehead of that man that dares lie to a prophet of God!" (26.) **went not mine heart**, with thee in the whole transaction; **Is it a time to receive money**, when a Gentile is to be religiously impressed with the superiority of the religion of Jehovah! Is greed in keeping with pious character, then,

"While souls are wandering far and wide,
And curses swarm on every side."—*Keble*.

(27.) **The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee**. Oh heavy talents of Gehazi! Oh the horror of this unchangeable suit! How much better had been a light purse and a homely coat, with a sound body, a clear soul! His sin in his face and in his seed for ever!

QUESTIONS.

On Note.—What events immediately followed Naaman's cure? What singular gift did he offer Elisha? Why? By what case of conscience was he troubled? How did Elisha answer him? Why not more seriously? What words had **not** then been uttered? Luke 12:9.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 20. What does Gehazi say as he sees Naaman depart? Why does he call him "this Syrian"? Why does he say "as the Lord liveth"? Why does he run after Naaman? Why the purpose to take somewhat of him? Was Elisha too pious, too good, too simple, for his welfare? Dean Stanley says Gehazi had "a coarse grain;" what was it? How was it unlike Elisha?
- V. 21. By what in this verse does Naaman's humble and grateful nobleness appear?
- V. 22. What cunning falsehood does Gehazi now utter? Where were these schools of the prophets? Might not these two young students have needed money in spite of Gehazi's lie?
- V. 23. How great was Naaman's generosity? Why did Gehazi need to be urged?
- V. 24. Where was this tower or hill? Why did Gehazi bid these servants of Naaman adieu here?

- V. 25. How does he continue his deception? By what answer does he audaciously lie? Where did Gehazi think God was?
- V. 26. Had he at all deceived the prophet? Why was his wickedness most ill-timed? Can a man be excessively worldly and impress the world that he holds godliness to be "great gain"? Where is there in this lesson a covetous eye? Where a spirit of contempt? Where was Gehazi's first falsehood? Where his second? Where his third? Where designed deception upon Elisha? Where his heedlessness of God's honor?
- V. 27. What was his punishment? Was it any too severe? Had he not sinned terribly? In what abused his great privilege? Are there not many still living in the school of Mammon who claim to be in the school of Christ? What is the Golden Text?

Illustration.—"I asked them which of the ten commandments was the hardest to observe. One answered this one, another that one, till at last a little twelve-year-old said, 'The last is the hardest. I think no one can keep that.'" . . . If any scholar does not know what this one is, let him see Ex. 20: 17.

REMEMBER GEHAZI.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He that is greedy of gain, troubleth his own house."—PROV. 15:27.

April 29.]

LESSON V.

ELISHA AT DOTHAN.—2 Kings 6:8-18. B. C. 893.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 15-18.

8 ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be my camp.*

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 ¶ And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

I. Note upon Dothan.—Dothan is a place first mentioned (Gen. 37: 17) in connection with the history of Joseph. It next appears as the residence of Elisha. It is twelve miles north of Shechem, in the centre of the country, near the southern edge of the great plain of Esdraelon. The ancient name of Dothan still clings to this site, though no village exists or has existed there for a long period. The *tell*, or hill, on which the ruins are now seen shows itself twice in the brief account of Elisha, enabling us to see how the king of Syria could station his forces so as to compass the city, and how the mountain could appear to the prophet's servant "full of horses and chariots of fire."—*Dr. Hackett.*

II. Another Aspect of Elisha.—Elisha now appears in a new aspect, of which also he is the first representative. He is the support and champion of his countrymen in their time of need against their foreign enemies. He conveys to the king of Israel secret intelligence of all the movements of the Syrians. He is in this respect, as Stanley says, the forerunner of Micah and Isaiah. He is the soul of the patriotic party in the invaded kingdom. This lesson is introduced by the record of a new invasion of Syria from the north upon Israel in the south. Ahab, as we remember, finished his northern work badly, and hostilities are again renewed. Where justice does not receive her dues, there troubles continue to arise. Still, Elisha is wonderfully merciful in spirit and in act. See vs. 21-23. He will not allow prisoners of war to be killed—a kindness of spirit that puts Turkish warlike character to shame. Our lesson, however, precedes this catholic action.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Syrian invasion, v. 8.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 6: 1-23.
II. The invasion disclosed, vs. 9, 10.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 13; Luke 6: 20-36.
III. Supposed Syrian treachery, 11, 12.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 13; Matt. 10: 16-31.
IV. Elisha compassed about, vs. 13, 14.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 15; Ex. 14: 10-31.
V. Elisha's servant alarmed, 15, 16.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 16; 2 Chr. 32: 1-8.
VI. His eyes opened, v. 17.	<i>Sat.</i> v. 17; Matt. 26: 47-56.
VII. The Syrians blinded, v. 18.	<i>SUN.</i> Ps. 34.

EXPLANATIONS.—(8.) **Then**, after the miracle which Elisha would rather work than lose a borrowed axe (vs. 1-7); **the king**—*i. e.*, Benhadad (v. 24); **my camp**, encamping. (9.) **the man of God sent to the king of Israel**, Elisha being as good as a thousand scouts. But what strange state-service, besides his spiritual! See Note II. If Israel is wanting to God, he will not be wanting to them. (10.) **saved himself there**, Heb., “was ware”—*i. e.*, was cautious, even to safety. (11.) **was sore troubled**, supposing, not unnaturally, that a traitor was in his house, because of so many disappointments in his plans, secretly announced to Jehoram, king of Israel. So he asks, “Will no one denounce the traitor?” (12.) **said, None, my lord**—*i. e.*, “No, no; we have no such traitor.” **but Elisha telleth**. How famous was Elisha in foreign regions! **the words thou speakest**, also the thoughts thou thinkest; obtained from an infallible informant. This may have been learned to be true of Elisha from some of the Israelites. It was *supernatural knowledge*. (13.) **And he said, Go and spy where he is**. Did he think that Elisha at that moment knew his command? **in Dothan**, see Note I. (14.) **horses, . . . chariots, . . . host**, or footmen, three arms of the service; **came by night**, to cover their exploit. (15.) **when the servant**, Gehazi's successor; **was risen early**, the intentions of the Syrians having possibly oozed out; **said, Alas, my master! how shall we do?** the servant being paralyzed with fear on the sight of the encompassing army. (16.) **he answered, Fear not**. “Oh, the undaunted courage of Elisha!” But what a command with such a spectacle before the servant's eyes! **they that be with us are more**. “One with God is a majority.” This is the conviction of all God's saints when the world persecutes them. Ps. 34: 7; 55: 18; 91:

11; 2 Chron. 32:7. "God they know is on their side; they need not fear what flesh can do. His angels—an innumerable host—are ever guarding those who love him." (17.) **open his eyes**, since only spiritual sight can see the things of God. Notice, Elisha does not pray that heavenly troops may be gathered, *but that they may be seen.* **and, behold, the mountain**, the hill on which Dothan stood; **was full of horses**, they were there before, only not seen; **chariots of fire**, symbols of an angelic host. See 2 Kings 2:11; Ps. 68:17. **round about Elisha**, an inner circle of heavenly guards within the outer one of the Syrian besiegers. (18.) **came down**, from the rising ground opposite Dothan; **with blindness**, a temporary haze or illusion. See vs. 19-23.

QUESTIONS.

Questions upon Notes.—Where was Dothan? In a valley or on a hill? In what new aspect does Elisha now appear? Of what prophets is he in this a forerunner?

Upon Bible Lesson.—

- V. 8. With what miracle is this lesson introduced? What king of Israel was too lenient with Syria? How does Syria now act? Why is mercy to the guilty cruelty oftentimes to the innocent? Who is the king of Syria? Who now the king of Israel?
- V. 9. By whom are the military acts of Jehoram now guided? Does Elisha pay idolatrous Israel evil for good? Why not?
- V. 10. How is Elisha's secret intelligence proved to be true?
- V. 11. Why is the king of Syria sore troubled?
- V. 12. Is any traitor to be found in his army? How is this mysterious information that is conveyed to the king explained? Among other things, what does God discern? Heb. 4:12; Ps. 94:11. Why does not God give supernatural knowledge to any Elishas nowadays?
- V. 13. In giving this command to spy out Elisha, what does Benhadad fail to think of? Where was Elisha to be found?
- V. 14. What effort is made to capture him there? Why was the city encompassed at night? Why is wickedness most indulged in in the night? John 3:20.
- V. 15. Why was Elisha's servant up so early? What does he see? To whom does he rush? What does he say?
- V. 16. What is Elisha's command? Why need there be no fear? What has ever been the conviction of God's persecuted people? See explanation on v. 16 and passages. When afraid, what did David do? Ps. 56:3.
- V. 17. When the servant's eyes were opened, what did they see? Did Elisha pray for these hosts, or were they

there? If our eyes were opened, should we not see a "thousand liveried angels" encompassing all pure souls? Who, then, has the "heaviest battalions," Elisha or Benhadad? Who the surest defence, Christ or Anti-christ? What, then, is the victory that overcometh the world? 1 John 5: 4.

Reflection.—O tried soul! encompassed about with earthly sorrows, thou, too, art in an inner circle of heavenly safety and deliverance, as Elisha was at Dothan. Ps. 94: 19.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."
—2 KINGS 6: 16.

DIAMOND TEXT.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Ps. 34: 7.

May 6.]

LESSON VI.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.—2 Kings 7: 12-20. B. C. 892.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 17-20.

12 ¶ And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the mul-

titude of the Israelites that are consumed): and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

17 ¶ And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

20 And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

Historical Connection.—We come to events more interesting than fiction. "Not many good turns are written in marble; soon have these Syrians forgotten the merciful action of Israel." ch. 6: 21-23. On the principle of returning evil for good, they return to the invasion of Samaria (v. 24), to find famine brought upon Israel. For what cause but for idolatry? By whom? by Jehovah, or by his servant, Elisha? The extent of the famine was dreadful; things not eatable in their nature became dear and dainty; mothers covenanted with each other to slay their children in turn for food, and had quarrels if either party broke her pledge. vs. 26-29, Jehoram, arguing from Elisha's miracles that he could deliver Israel from such a terrible famine if he liked, in the spirit of his mother, Jezebel, and almost in her words concerning Elijah (1 Kings 19: 2), threatened to take Elisha's head. v. 31. Hearing of which, Elisha provided for his safety, but the king was impatient. "Behold this evil" (famine) "is of the Lord," and Elisha is his heedless prophet; "what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" But oh, the mercy of God is everlasting. Elisha had now good news for Jehoram, "the son of the murderer"—news of plenty in the land before another day had passed. This was incredible to the lord on whom the king leaned: "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven"—send another deluge of bread like that of water—"this might be." Plenty would come, however, though this lord partook of it not; for his unbelief he would have to die. But how did the Lord bring plenty to Samaria? By the unwitting service of four lepers. In the extremity of the famine they decided to enter the Syrian camp; it was death out of this camp, it would be no more than death in it. On coming to the outermost tents, "behold, there was no man." It was all silence and solitude. God had put a panic into the hearts of the Syrians, and they had fled, leaving untold plenty behind them.

The lepers "fill their bellies and hide their treasures," and at last reported the news to Israel shut up in Samaria. It came quickly to the king's household. But Jehoram suspected mischief in the enemy's flight; he sent out scouts; the scouts returned; the people issued then forth upon the prey, killing the unbelieving gate-keeper in the rush of the crowd. A pity it was he did not believe Elisha.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. The king suspects a trick, v. 12.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 6 : 24-33 : 7 : 1-20.
II. Report of scouts, vs. 13-15.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 12; Josh. 8 : 3-19.
III. The people rush for the prey, v. 16.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 13; Job 5.
IV. Elisha's word fulfilled, vs. 17-20.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 13; Jer. 15.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 15; Gen. 41 : 25-57.
	<i>Sat.</i> v. 19; John 20 : 24-29.
	<i>Sun.</i> v. Ps. 105.

EXPLANATIONS.—(12.) **In the night**, not despising good news, though brought by lepers; **his servants**, high officers, not domestics; **they are gone to hide themselves**, a very natural suspicion. Cyrus used the like stratagem. Not wholly unlike the taking of Ai. Josh. 8 : 3-19. (13.) **five of the horses**—*i. e.*, a "small body of horse," to go forth on discovery; **behold they are**, etc., a round-about way of saying that the horsemen would be as safe out of the city as in it if the famine continued. (14.) **two chariot horses**, "a mistranslation" (*Speaker's Com.*), for they "*took two horse-chariots*," with its needful complement of men and horses. (15.) **into Jordan**, the route of the Syrians from Samaria to Damascus; **in their haste**, or alarm. (16.) **a measure**, literally, "*a seah*," equal to a peck and a half of English measure; **for a shekel**, about forty-six cents; **two measures of barley**, about three pecks; **according to the word of the Lord**. See v. 1. (17.) **the lord**, "the captain" (v. 2; Ex. 14 : 7; 1 Kings 9 : 22); **the people trode upon him in the gate**, in the rush out and in, trampling the very man that had doubted Elisha's prophecy to death. It was not the rudeness of the people, however, but his unbelief, that killed him. God abased him to the heels of the multitude.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—How did Syria repay the mercifulness of Elisha? What calamity, added to Syrian invasion, had now overtaken Israel? Who sent it? For what? How

great was the stress of the famine? What contracts did mothers make at the time? What quarrels did they have? Jehoram hitherto has asked advice of Elisha (ch. 6 : 21); how does he now treat the prophet? When ills overtake a people, why is blame ever heaped upon God's ministers? How does Elisha make self-defence? ch. 6 : 32. Does it lessen Jehoram's impatience? v. 33. What strange good news does Elisha now utter? Who disbelieves it? In what words? How does God bring about plenty? v. 3, etc. What does he make the hosts of Syria to hear? v. 6. After what selfish acts do these lepers report the Syrian flight to Israel?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 12. What trick does Jehoram suspect? What similar stratagem in the Bible did he possibly recall?
- V. 13. What test was now tried? Why was there little risk in it?
- V. 14. Did they really take "two chariot horses"? If not, what?
- V. 15. Why did the search extend to the Jordan?
- V. 16. How far did the people spoil the Syrian tents? How much was a measure of fine flour? How little was it worth on this day of plenty? How much barley could be bought for the same money? What prophecy was now fulfilled? What is the Golden Text?
- V. 17. Whose fate is now to be described? How did Jehoram honor him? What happened to him at the gate? Whose word was now fulfilled? Will not all of God's threatenings against sinners be visited upon them? What is it that leads men to abuse God's patience with their sins? Eccl. 8 : 11. Learn well, therefore, the following truth:

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."—
LUKE 18 : 27.

May 13.] LESSON VII.

JEHU THE KING.—2 Kings 10 : 20-31. B. C. 884.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 28-31.

20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but the worshippers of Baal only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.*

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.

27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

29 ¶ Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that *were* in Bethel, and that *were* in Dan.

30 And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Historical Connection with Jehu.—The time has now come for taking righteous vengeance upon the bloody and idolatrous house of Ahab, predicted by Elijah fifteen years ago. 1 Kings 21: 17-19, 23, 24. For Ahab's humiliation, however, before Elijah this evil was not brought on his house in his days, but in his son's days. This son was Jehoram, by Jezebel. Ahab was killed by a bow drawn at a venture in the battle with Syria. 1 Kings 22: 34. After Elijah came Elisha; after Ahab, his son Jehoram. As we have seen, Elisha was the adviser of Jehoram, "having neither cottage nor foot of land of his own, yet giving orders to kingdoms." But events move on. Jehoram is at war, in Ramoth-Gilead, with Hazael, successor of Benhadad in the kingdom of Syria. The captain of his host, and high in his favor, was Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi. 2 Kings 9: 2. He it was who was destined by the will of the Lord, as made known by Elijah to Elisha (1 Kings 19: 15-17), to be the anointed king of Israel, so founding the fifth dynasty of Israel. Jehoram is at home from war,

recovering from wounds, in his palace at Jezreel; Ahaziah, the king of Judah, is with him for sympathy; and now Elisha, too aged to go himself, sends a young prophet to Gilead to inform Jehu of his call of God to the kingdom. He is anointed, the only one of all the kings of the ten tribes (2 Kings 9:1-7); receives serious orders to smite the whole house of Ahab, and at once proceeds to execute this judgment. The whole account should be studied. His first avenging work is *political*; he slays Jehoram (2 Kings 9:22-26); Ahaziah (vs. 27-29); painted and haughty Jezebel (vs. 30-37); this in Jezreel, the chief palace of the kingdom. At Samaria, the mother-city, he seeks out and slays Ahab's seventy sons (ch. 10:1-11); then his kinsfolk, favorites, and priests (v. 12); then forty-two jolly brethren of Ahaziah, going on a visit to the sons of Ahab. vs. 13, 14. Now he lights upon Jehonadab, an honest Rechabite, abstemious, austere, of the manners of the Bedouin race (1 Chron. 2:55; Judges 4:11); pledges with him friendship; takes him into his chariot; reveals to him his second work of vengeance, of a *religious* character. This he executes with cunning by no means to be commended, justifying his cold regard in history. This introduces the lesson.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Festival for Baal proclaimed, 20.
- II. The gathered worshippers, 21-23.
- III. A guard stationed, v. 24.
- IV. The sacrifice and massacre, v. 25.
- V. Images destroyed, vs. 26-28.
- VI. "Sins of omission," v. 29-31.

READINGS.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| <i>Mon.</i> | 2 Kings 10:19-36. |
| <i>Tues.</i> | 1 Kings 19:13-21. |
| <i>Wed.</i> | 2 Kings 8. |
| <i>Thurs.</i> | 2 Kings 9. |
| <i>Fri.</i> | 2 Kings 10:1-19. |
| <i>Sat.</i> | v. 23; Jer. 35. |
| <i>Sun.</i> | Rom. 12. |

EXPLANATIONS.—(20.) See vs. 18, 19; **for Baal**, never had that god such proclamation as this in Israel. (21.) **And they came**, flocked, applauded each other's happiness, and praised Jehu's devotion to Baal; **into the house of Baal**, built by Ahab and Jezebel, of vast courts, containing thousands; **full from one end to another**, literally "brimful." (22.) **over the vestry**, the robe-room either of the temple or royal palace; **vestments**, changes of raiment, of which every king had thousands. Baal's own priests had robes of white *byssus*, or fine linen, when about the functions of their office. (23.) **and Jehonadab**. Jehonadab must have believed that Jehu acted from the highest principles of piety. His father, or ancestor, was Rechab, of the Kenites, an Arab tribe that entered Palestine with Israel. Their life was ascetic; they vowed never to drink wine (Jer. 35:6, 7), to build houses, or to sow seed. Jeremiah pronounced a blessing upon them. v. 19; ch. 35. **search and look**, persons not in sympathy with Baal-worship would profane its rites. (24.) **to offer**

sacrifices, so to deceive and secure the presence of all. Then came the bloody sacrifice of men, for which this one of beasts was designed. (25.) **went to the city of the house of Baal**, from the courts of the temple, flowing with blood, to its inner chamber. (26.) **images**, statues, columns, or obelisks; images of inferior deities. (27.) **the image of Baal**, the chief one, especially dedicated to him; **a draught house**, a depository of filth. See Ezra 6:11; Dan. 2:5. (29.) **Howbeit**, Jehu showed zeal in destroying the worshippers of *false* gods, but he connived at the mis-worship of the *true* one. (30.) **hast done well**, as ordered (2 Kings 9:7), by the house of Ahab. "He was neither great nor good in himself, but only an instrument in removing evil and in preparing the way for the good—an Augustus Cæsar of Rome." Baal-worship never appears again in Israel. **thy children of the fourth generation**, for above a hundred years, the longest dynasty of Israel. (31.) **for he departed**, in part. "Woe to us if we be not all thine, O God!"

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—Upon whose royal house is vengeance now to be executed? By whose order? By whom was this vengeance first foretold? Ought we to take private revenge? Rom. 12:19. Who is God's agent in executing this vengeance? Who informs him that he is to be king? Where was he at this time? Whom does he now kill first? What king of Judah next? What very near relative next? What challenge does he now give to the heirs of Ahab's royal house? Is it accepted? ch. 10:1-5. How many of Ahab's sons does Jehu now kill? How many kindred from Judah? Where were they going? All this is for *political* ends; what *religious* zeal is Jehu about to show? Would such plots now be consistent with Christian character? How were they in any view defensible then?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 20. What excessive idolatry does Jehu propose to indulge in? v. 18. What does he now proclaim?
- V. 21. In what spirit did these worshippers come to the festival? What gives a man true joy alone? Isa. 12:3.
- V. 23. Who was Jehonadab? What was peculiar to his tribe? Where did Jehu first meet him? 2 Kings 10:12-15. What was his opinion of Jehu's present proceeding? Why this care to have no servants of the Lord in the house?
- V. 24. Whom does Jehu put on guard? What injunction is put upon them?

- V. 25. Why does Jehu at first offer sacrifices? Then what happens?
- V. 26. How is the destruction of Baal-worship further carried out?
- V. 28. Does it ever appear again in the northern kingdom?
- V. 29. In what respects is Jehu hereafter a transgressor? Was this false worship or mis-worship? Are little sins small?
- V. 30. How does Jehovah reward Jehu for obedience? How long will his dynasty continue? (B. C. 884-773.) From what has the phrase "to drive like Jehu" arisen? 2 Kings 9: 20. In what character do we see Jehu at last?
- V. 31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart."—2 KINGS 10: 31.

May 20.] LESSON VIII.

JONAH AT NINEVEH.—Jonah 3: 1-10. B. C. 825-810.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 5-10.

1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. (Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.)

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey; and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through

Nineveh (by the decree of the king and his nobles), saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water.

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

This Lesson.—One questions the wisdom of giving but one lesson in this International Series to the *prophecy of Jonah*. It might well engage our study for a month. There is, however, no relief. One lesson it must be; let all, therefore, give to it special study.

Jonah.—Jonah was a son of Amittai, a native of *Gath-hepher*, in Lower Galilee (2 Kings 14: 25), an hour's ride only north-east of Nazareth. He was to Jeroboam II., the great-grandson of Jehu, what Elisha had been to Jehu. He was born about B. C. 850, and began to prophesy about B. C. 825-810. He was a contemporary, if not a disciple, of the now-aged Elisha; "a child when Homer was an old blind bard, a century the senior of Romulus, and four centuries more ancient than Herodotus."—*Dr. C. E. Stowe*. He is prior to Isaiah by a hundred years: the oldest of the prophets whose writings have reached our times (see *Smith's Dict.*). His personal history has been set down by German critics as fictitious, in whole or in part. Of its absolute truth, however, we need have no doubt. The hoary antiquity and simplicity of the language of the prophecy ascribed to him; the historical allusions in Job xiv. 4-6, 15, in Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 10, § 2; the historical and geographical notices, concurrent with facts as exploration has revealed them; the thought that all miracles might as well be doubted as those this prophecy records; and above all the explicit sanction our Lord has given to the prophecy of Jonah as much as to that of Elijah, Elisha, or Isaiah (Matt. 12: 39, 41; 16: 4; Luke 11: 29)—justify us in its full belief. But say some, "The miracles recorded in it are hard and undignified, not easy to be believed. The whale could not have swallowed Jonah, nor could he have lived three days in his belly." To this it may be answered that the *Cacharias* is a fish of the Mediterranean of sufficient size to swallow a man whole (see *Bibl. Sacra*, x. 950; Bochart, *Hierez.* 3: 688). Besides, there is no question if hard or easy, probable or improbable, in regard to a real miracle. Human notions of dignity are small matters with God. Matt. 19: 26.

Object of the Book.—The great object of the book of Jonah (possibly a fragment of the original) is to show that the divine regards and mercies are not confined to the Jews alone, but are extended to all nations, "Jonah is the first apostle, though involuntary and unconscious, of the Gentiles."—*Stanley*. In Jonah's despondent and rebellious flight there is a message to preachers of every age not to shrink from the call of truth and duty. In his deliverance from the sea there is a notable symbol of our Lord's resurrection; in his return to his work, the quick reaction of all true souls; in his anger "for the gourd" (ch. 4), an example of many a man's discontent to find God "a gracious God;" and in the humiliation of Nineveh, together with God's sparing mercy, a gospel of the boundless power of national as well as personal repentance over him whose pity is infinite.

ANALYSIS

- I. Jonah's new commission, vs. 1, 2.
- II. Goes to Nineveh, v. 3.
- III. Declares his message, v. 4.
- IV. Repentance of Nineveh, vs. 5-9.
- V. God's sparing mercy, v. 10.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Jonah 1.
Tues. Jonah 2.
Wed. Jonah 3.
Thurs. Jonah 4.
Fri. Nahum 1.
Sat. Nahum 2, 3.
SUN. Matt. 12 : 38-50.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **The second time**, for first time see ch. 1, etc. (2.) **unto Nineveh that great city**, the ancient capital of Assyria, on the east bank of the Tigris, sixty miles in circumference, containing 600,000 people. The only mention of it in the Bible before the time of Jonah is at the time of the dispersion (Gen. 10 : 11), and it has so far existed 1500 years. The kingdom of Assyria has, however, been repeatedly referred to before this in connection either with Syria or Israel. On an obelisk of black *basalt* brought from *Nimroud* by Mr. Layard, originally set up by *Shalmanezzer I.*, king of Assyria, the following is cited as among his tributaries: "*Jehu, the son of Omri*" (dynasty). The present king of Nineveh is probably *Adram-melech II.* (B. C. 840). It is the most magnificent of all the capitals of the ancient world. According to Diodorus, it had surrounding walls 100 feet high, broad enough for three chariots to drive abreast upon them, defended by 1500 towers each 200 feet in height. This, however, may be largely exaggerated; still, Nineveh was very large, rich, and beautiful. It fell completely into decay before the period of authentic secular history and before the time of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, or about B. C. 610. Good reading now would be Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains* and Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i.; **the preaching that I bid thee**, God's messenger must preach positively, not apologetically; as God bids, not as the world suggests or demands. (3.) **so Jonah arose and went**, his previous reluctance having been no more strange than that of Moses (Ex. 4), or that of Elisha (1 Kings 19), who had shrunk from exposure to peril. The reason he alleges for not having gone before is given in ch. 4 : 2. (4.) **a day's journey**—i. e., in all, about the city—proclaiming his message. For the reason of this predicted doom see ch. 1 : 2. (5.) **believed God**, through a

sense of their guilt produced by divine influence. This penitence was ever a reproach to hard-hearted Jews, and was possibly so designed. Matt. 12 : 41. (7.) **neither man nor beast**, Oriental fasting often including both. (8.) **the violence**, the rapacity, greed of gain. (10.) **repented of the evil**, the change in *them* is represented as a change in God ; "the curse causeless shall not come."—*Fairbairn*.

QUESTIONS.

On Preparatory Notes.—Who was Jonah's father? Where was his native place? Who was king of Israel then? What aged prophet still lived? What book of prophecy have we earlier than Jonah? What reasons have we for believing the book of Jonah to be true history? Why is *probability* never to enter into the consideration of a *real* miracle? Is anything hard or easy to God? Why is there is no necessity for believing that God created a great fish specially to swallow Jonah? Will you state the grand object of the book of Jonah, and some of its most profitable lessons?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. What new commission does Jonah now receive? How did he act upon receiving the same once before? Where did he embark for flight? To what place did he propose to sail? Ans. *Authorities differ. Tartessus* on the coast on Spain, or *Tarsus* in Cilicia. Will you state his history from this flight until now?
- V. 2. Where was Nineveh? How long had it existed so far? How large was it? Number of its people? Who was its present king? How long after this did the city exist? Who destroyed it finally? Nah. 1 : 8, 9; 2 : 10. What should be the preaching of God's messengers to the world? Gal. 1 : 8, 9.
- V. 4. Why is this limit of "forty days" put to Nineveh's existence?
- V. 5. etc. To what acts does Nineveh at once surrender herself? How extended is her penitence? Are not national fasts sometimes timely?
- V. 10. How does this penitence affect God? Was this change in God, or in the Ninevites? Can God change? Num. 23 : 19; Mal. 3 : 6; Jas. 1 : 17. Why was Jonah afterward angry at this divine mercy? ch. 4 : 1, 2. What does he ask God to do? How does God chasten his vindictive thoughts? vs. 4-11.

Illustrations.—"In Moore's 'Lalla Rookh,' the Peri, having been promised forgiveness and readmission to Paradise on condition of bringing to the eternal gate the gift most dear to heaven, returns with the last drop of patriot's blood, but in vain; she brings the expiring sigh of faithful human love, and still the crystal bars move not. Again she brings the *tear of penitence* that has fallen from the

eye of a godless wretch melted into contrition by a child's prayer. For this alone the golden hinges turn."—*Rev. A. P. Peabody, D. D.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."
—MATT. 12: 41.



May 27.]

LESSON IX.

THE DEATH OF ELISHA.—2 Kings 13: 14-21. B. C. 838. :

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 14, 20, 21.

14 ¶ Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

16 And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*.

18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times: then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.

20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of *men*; and they cast the man

into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

Elisha's Record.—This lesson seems to us to be chronologically misplaced. Jonah, though born (B. C. 850) before Elisha's death, probably prophesied, as in last lesson, about B. C. 825-810. From the date of last lesson, therefore, we must go back to B. C. 838 (see *Smith's Tables, O. T. Hist.*, p. 590). Elisha has lived a long life. His name is first mentioned to Elijah in the cave at Horeb (1 Kings 19: 16, 17); he is first introduced to us, however, when ploughing in the fields of his native Abel-meholah. vs. 19-21. This was about B. C. 903. Allowing that he was not at this time over twenty years of age, he must have lived eighty-five or ninety years at least, and must have been in active public life from Elijah's ascension (B. C. 896) nearly sixty. His long life began possibly at the close of the *second* dynasty of Israel, continued through the *third*, that of Omri (B. C. 925-884), and to the forty-sixth year of the *fourth* (B. C. 838). Baal-worship, established in Samaria when Elisha was but a child, and successfully challenged by his predecessor Elijah, but prevalent still, was utterly rooted out in Israel under Jehu long before Elisha's death. To Jehu, Elisha was a real prime-minister: to his country, a champion and friend. He does not again appear till we find him on his deathbed in his own house, possibly in Shunem, not far from Jezreel. Elijah had dwelt in the desert, and from a place unrequented, save by the wanderer's feet, ascended to heaven; but Elisha was a man among men, and among men he died. No one way is appointed unto men to leave this world; one hath more speed, another more pain; both blessedly pass through the gates. So Elisha passed away. "Whilst he lived he was not moved by the presence of any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection. No word could overcome him. He did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous." Eccles. 48: 13, 14. In this his death almost excelled his life, so the Jews believed that—

*"Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving of it."*—Shakespeare.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Elisha "fallen sick," v. 14.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Kings 13: 14-21.
II. Visited by King Joash, v. 14.	<i>Tues.</i> 2 Kings 2: 1-14.
III. Predictions before his death, vs. 15-19.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 16; 1 Cor. 2: 1-16.
IV. His death, v. 20.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 17; Isa. 43: 1-21.
V. Miracle after it, v. 21.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 19; Matt. 13: 45-58.
	<i>Sat.</i> v. 20; Ps. 90.
	<i>Sun.</i> v. 21; Mark 5: 24-34.

EXPLANATIONS.—(14.) Now Elisha, from whom we have heard nothing now for forty-five or six years. ch. 9: 1, 2; **was fallen sick**, when nearly ninety years old. "The longest day must have its evening," and holiness "privilegeth no man from final dissolution;" **whereof he died**, what

his sickness was is not known, probably the breaking up of old age :

“ Whatever poet, orator, or sage
May say of it, old age is still old age;
It is the waning, not the crescent, moon,
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of noon.”—*Longfellow*.

And Joash the king, the grandson of Jehu, son and successor of Jehoahaz on the throne of Israel (B. C. 840-825). When he became king, Israel was in a deplorable state from the devastations of Hazael and Benhadad, kings of Syria. He still adhered to the calf-worship of Jeroboam (B. C. 975), and yet God, mindful of his covenant to Abraham, interposed to save him from foreign destruction; **came down to him**, in Shunem, where it is not unlikely that Elisha now was (*Speaker's Com.*). Visitation of the sick is a duty required, both by the law of humanity and of religion; **and said**, the exact words used by Elisha of Elijah (2 Kings 2), not by coincidence, but probably on purpose, as if he would say, “Thou, too, since Elijah, hast been the defence of Israel. Thine own words are true of thee, as they were of thy predecessor.” “The worst men may speak well.” “The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.” (15.) **take bow and arrows**, “I have,” Elisha seems to say, “glad predictions to announce.” (16.) **he put his hand upon it**, showing that success comes not from human but divine strength; strength made perfect oftentimes is weakness. (17.) **eastward**, toward Gilead, soon to be the scene of Joash's victories over Syria; **in Aphek**, across the Jordan, almost exactly due east from Shunem. (18.) **smite upon**, Kiel prefers “SHOOT TO THE GROUND,” as from the window of Elisha's room; **he smote and stayed**, so apt we are to be wanting to ourselves, by our unfaithfulness limiting God's mercy. Mark 6 : 5, 6. (19.) **but thrice**, not utterly, but partially. See v. 25. (20.) **buried him**, Josephus says with a magnificent funeral (*Ant. Jud.* ix. 8, § 6). (21.) **touched the bones of Elisha he revived**, it is for God to decide how he will work miracles, whether with *any* instrument or with *what* instrument. See Mark 5 : 27; Acts 19 : 12; 5 : 15. “God will be free in his works.”

QUESTIONS.

On Elisha's Record.—Where do we first hear of Elisha in the Bible? What is he doing when first introduced to us? About

how old was he then? What time was this before Christ? How long was he a servant or companion to Elijah? How long after Elijah's ascension did Elisha live? Will you look at Genealogical Table and tell what kings of Israel have reigned and passed away in Elisha's life? What phase of idolatry did he live to see destroyed out of Israel? Do you recall the king that did this work? How old was he at the time of his sickness? How was Elisha's departure different from Elijah's? Why is it well we do not know *when* or *how* we shall die? What, then, should be our chief care? Amos 4 : 12 ; 2 Kings 20 : 1.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 14. How long is it since we have heard from Elisha? What was Elisha's sickness? Who visited him? Why should we visit the sick? What was the character of Joash? May not a man weep over a useful friend, and still not very much love that friend's God? How do you account for Joash's exclamation?
- V. 15. Why is Joash bidden to take "bow and arrows"? What prophecy is in this symbol?
- V. 16. Why does Elisha put his hand on the hand of Joash? Will human effort alone save this world? 1 Cor. 2 : 4, 5.
- V. 17. Why was the arrow shot eastward? Where was Aphek situated?
- V. 18. Why was Joash bidden to "smite the ground"? Why did Joash smite three times only? Why was Elisha "wroth"? When may Christians impoverish themselves? Matt. 13 : 58.
- V. 20. How was Elisha buried? Why does not the Bible say so?
- V. 21. What strange miracle occurred after his death? What miracles of kindred character have we in the New Testament? After death, what are we told to look for? Heb. 9 : 27.

Illustration.—There is an inscription on a child's tombstone in an English churchyard, as follows: "'Who plucked that flower?' cried the gardener as he walked through the garden. His fellow-servant answered, 'The Master.' And the gardener ever held his peace."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He being dead yet speaketh."—HEB.
11 : 4.

June 3.]

LESSON X.

THE LAMENTATION OF AMOS.—Amos 5:1-15. B. C. 800.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 4-8.

1 Hear ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.

2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up.

3 For thus saith the Lord God; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

4 ¶ For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live:

5 But seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to nought.

6 Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Beth-el.

7 Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

8 *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord *is* his name.

9 That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.

10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right*.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time.

14 Seek good and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

I. The Prophetic Office in Israel and Judah.—Moses prophesied, but with him prophecy for a long time expired. With Samuel the gift was renewed and continued in unbroken succession down to Malachi (B. C. 1100-400). At the time of the disruption the northern kingdom became the kingdom of the prophets; so it continued for two centuries. Here prophesied Elijah, Elisha,

Jonah, Amos, and Hosea; here were many prophetic centres, Beth-el, Jericho, Gilgal, Carmel; here prophecy at first was oral, not written, since it was mainly designed for the preservation of the religious and national unity; hence few prophecies of this period remain save in the fragments of the book of Kings. But in the reign of Jeroboam II. (B. C. 825-784), the greatest King of Israel, there arose the first gleam of that prophetic light which, from the brilliant constellation of prophets, gleaned over the fall of both the northern and southern kingdoms, shone in their captivities, and flashed still further forward in the prediction of the forerunner who should precede the Sun of righteousness. To the reign of Jeroboam belong the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, now to be studied. They fill up the brief narrative of the kings by the light they throw upon the internal condition of the Hebrew state, the prevalence of idolatry, the almost universal drunkenness and oppression. After them the great school of prophets is in Judah, the southern kingdom; Isaiah, with writings more extended than all the minor (shorter) prophets, Micah and Nahum; then Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, and the last of the older prophets, Jeremiah. The two conspicuous prophets of the captivity were Ezekiel and Daniel; the group following it, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. See *Stanley, 1 Series*, p. 469, etc. By prophecy is meant "the boiling or bubbling over" (Gesenius) of the divine fountain of inspiration in the soul; hence the telling, or fore telling, of the divine thought or purpose. Its form is now lyrical, now didactic, now dramatic. Its chief task is prediction. It shows one "far-off divine event," to which "the whole creation moves." Heb. 1:1.

II. Amos.—Amos was a native of *Tekoah*, in Judah, twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem; his father is unknown; his circumstances poor; his avocation that of a shepherd; not a prophet nor son of a prophet until called by Jehovah to be a prophet, and that not in Judah, but in Israel. Here was the scene of his labors. These were chiefly occupied in denouncing the evils of his times, in predicting coming national judgments, and in uttering some anticipatory evangelical strains. The scene of his ministry was Bethel.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. The prophet's lamentation, vs. 1-3.	<i>Mon.</i> Amos 1.
II. Begs Israel to seek the Lord, 4-9.	<i>Tues.</i> " 2.
III. Portrays their wickedness, 10-13.	<i>Wed.</i> " 3.
IV. Repeats his entreaties, v. 14.	<i>Thurs.</i> " 4, 5.
V. With encouraging words, v. 15.	<i>Fri.</i> " 6, 7.
	<i>Sat.</i> " 8, 9.
	<i>Sun.</i> v. 15; Ezek. 33: 11-19.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **Hear ye this word**, in chapters 1 and 2, Amos has pronounced judgments against the Syrians, Philistines, Phœnicians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, the Jews as a class, and the Israelites in particular; he is now (ch. 3-6) uttering special discourses against Israel. **even a lamentation**, as in vs. 3, 16; formed after the model, and

expressed in the language, of real sorrow; with sentences simple, pathetic, abrupt, unembellished. (2.) **The virgin of Israel is fallen,**

“Hear my voice, O Israel, hear!
Whilst I thy fate deplore;
Thy virgin daughter, Sion! falls—
She falls to rise no more.”—*Lowth.*

Called a virgin, because never subdued by a foreign prince.—*Henderson.* As applied to a state, there is an implied beauty, luxury, wealth, all that pride can wish.—*Calvin.* “This brief but touching elegy describes the utterly prostrate and helpless condition to which the Assyrians were to reduce the ten tribes.” (3.) **by a thousand**—*i. e.*, could furnish thousands of warriors; **shall leave a hundred**, so great would be the depopulation. (4.) **Seek ye me**, since there is room for repentance; **and live**, effect of repentance. (5.) **But seek not Bethel**, one of the centres of calf-worship (2 Kings 12: 29, etc.); **into Gilgal**, between Jericho and the Jordan, now turned into a place of idolatry (Hos. 4: 15; 9: 15; 12: 11); **pass not to Beer-sheba**, twenty-five miles south of Hebron, the scene of Abraham calling on the everlasting God (Gen. 21: 31, 33), at this time a place of idolatrous worship; **for Gilgal**, a play on words: “for Gilgal (*rolling*) shall rolling be rolled away;” **and Bethel**—*i. e.*, “the house of God,” shall come to *Bethaven*, the house of vanity. (6.) **house of Joseph**, for Ephraim, whose father Joseph was. (7.) **judgment to wormwood**, justice to bitterness. (8.) **the seven stars**—*i. e.*, the Pleiades (plē’ya-dēz). Job 9: 10; 38: 31. A sublime description of the omnipotence of God; **and poureth them out**, in inundations, deluges, floods. (9.) **That strengtheneth**, rather, “That bringeth destruction suddenly upon the mighty, and destruction cometh upon the fortress.”—*Henderson.* The prophet here appeals to the fears of men. In next verse he pictures their sins; they hate their teachers, reprovers, and magistrates. (11.) **burdens**, tributes; instead of remitting, they exact taxes from the poor. (13.) **the prudent shall keep silence**, waiting for God’s interposing hand as the only hope left. (15.) **It may be**, the uncertainty is with man only. See Ezek. 33: 14-16.

QUESTIONS.

On the Prophetic Office.—What kingdom with the disruption of the monarchy became the kingdom of the prophets? How

long did this prophetic supremacy over Judah continue in Israel? What prophets have we studied about this year? Did Elijah or Elisha leave any writings? Why not? With what had they chiefly to do? In whose reign did prophetic literature begin to be written? With what prophets? What book of the Bible do these prophecies fill up? What is the meaning of prophecy? Why is it written largely in poetic form?

On Amos.—What was the native place of Amos? His circumstances? His avocation? Was he a trained prophet? Why was Israel the scene of his labors? When did he prophesy? See ch. 1:1. (B. C. 800). Character of his prophecy?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Against whom thus far has Amos pronounced judgments? Against whom is he now writing? What elegies have we studied in our Bible lessons? 2 Sam. 18: 33; 1:17-27. What is characteristic of an elegiac sentence?
- V. 2. What does this elegy of Amos describe? When God turns against a nation, as he did at last against Israel, is not its condition pitiable? How could the prophets see the fall of nations before this fall was visible to these nations themselves?
- V. 3. How extensive was to be the depopulation of the ten tribes?
- V. 4. As long as divine judgments are withheld, for what has Israel space?
- V. 5. From what is Israel entreated to turn away? Who introduced calf-worship into Israel? What brother of Moses set him the example? How far does the sin of even one man reach?
- V. 6. Did idol-worship ever avert divine judgment? What is the symbol of judgment in this verse? What more frequent one, if any, is employed in the Bible? What fire should we all fear? Mark 9:47, 48.
- V. 8. What sublime description of omnipotence have we in this verse? What book is of more literary attractions than the Bible?
- V. 9. To what does Amos in this verse appeal? Has not fear, then, a place in religion?
- V. 10. Will you state some of the common sins of Israel? Is piety good for much if it perverts justice? If it robs the poor? If it steals other people's money? Rom. 2: 21.
- V. 11. When is silence better than hasty speech?
- V. 15. What reason have we to feel sure that God will pardon the penitent soul? Might not Israel, even in the days of Amos, have been saved from captivity if she had, like Nineveh, repented? Has the day as yet passed for penitence of spirit before God? Acts 17: 30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"If thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever."—1 CHR. 28:9.

Hear

June 10.]

LESSON XI.

THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL.—Hosea 14:1-9. B. C. 784-725.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 1-7.

1 O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

2 Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

3 Assur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard *him*, and observed him: I *am* like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

9 Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Facts to be Remembered.—A few facts must be kept constantly in mind: (1) that under the disruption of the monarchy the Jews became two bands, Israel and Judah; (2) that we have studied about Israel because it became the chief of the two kingdoms, and the centre for nearly two centuries of the prophetic school; (3) that this northern kingdom, beginning ill under Jeroboam (B. C. 975), went on from bad to worse, relaxing all the bonds of religion and morality; (4) that the first of the minor prophets (so called not from

less importance or authority, but from smaller bulk) directed their prophecies chiefly against the kingdom of the ten tribes. Of these were Amos and Hosea: (5) that the evils which were fast tending to the captivity and dissolution of the northern kingdom were not permitted as yet to infect the southern kingdom of Judah, save in a mitigated form: (6) that Elijah and Elisha were oral prophets only, to their age (B. C. 910-838): (7) that within a century after the death of Elisha we have Jonah, Amos, and Hosea with written prophecies, bringing us into contact with the heathen world, and holding before us scenes of terrible retribution to Israel in the very near future: (8) that in spite of the afflictions sent at first upon Israel, and at last upon Judah, God repeatedly urged them to return to their long-sighted Lord with promises of rich and abundant mercy.

Hosea.—It is generally agreed that the ministry of the prophet Hosea covered the years between B. C. 784 and 725. In the former year Jeroboam II. died; in the latter, Hezekiah began to reign. See ch. 1:1. Hosea was contemporary with Amos, Micah, and Isaiah. His mission was to Israel. He stands first in the order of minor prophets because his prophecy is the largest. During Hosea's ministry the ten tribes were fearfully corrupt. The able reign of Jeroboam II. did not save them from threatened anarchy and ruin. Hence, Hosea was sent to them, as Jeremiah to Judah afterward, to mourn over their sins and to offer them terms of salvation.

The book of Hosea may be divided into two parts, comprising, I. *symbolical representations* (ch. 1-3), and II. *prophetic discourses*, ch. 4-14. The first part gives a figurative representation of the shameful infidelity of Israel to God. "The marriage relation of Jehovah to his people constitutes the burden of the book."—David Brown. The second part contains several prophetic discourses delivered at different times. The foreground is full of approaching calamities, but by degrees the horizon becomes clear, and the glory of the latter time shines forth with unclouded lustre.—*Anno. Bible*. It is of this latter-day glory or revival our present lesson treats, than which nothing more attractive is to be found within the whole volume of Old Testament prophecy.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Israel entreated to return, vs. 1-3.	Mon. Micah 1, 2.
II. Promise of abundant mercy, vs. 4-8.	Tues. " 3, 4.
	Wed. " 5, 6.
	Thurs. " 7, 8.
	Fri. " 9, 10.
III. Conditioned by obedience, v. 9.	Sat. " 11, 12.
	Sun. " 13, 14.

EXPLANATIONS.—(2.) The calves of our lips, the victims, the sacrifices of thanksgiving. Ps. 51: 15-17; 69: 31, 32. (3.) Three of Israel's sins are here recited: (1) dependence upon the Assyrians; (2) call for Egyptian horses, Deut. 17: 16; Isa. 31: 1; (3) idolatry. These they now renounce; the fatherless, such as they who separate from

the Lord. vs. 5-8. In these verses "the love of God to his people and its effects in their happy experience are here couched in similes borrowed from the vegetable kingdom."—*Henderson*. The *dew* is copious in the East, and supplies the place of more frequent rain. The lilies abound in Palestine apart from cultivation; there are two kinds, one the *white* lily, the other the *royal* lily so called, growing three or four feet in height, most beautiful and engaging, both kinds symbolizing the moral beauty and power of regenerated Israel. The *roots* of Lebanon are the celebrated cedar trees, giving ideas of strength and stability. The *olive tree* is remarkable for its beautiful green and fragrant odor. Dwelling under his shadow refers to Jehovah; **shall return**, or revive again, as the corn long buried in the earth; **Ephraim shall say**, well, he ought to say something, "being the tribe above all the rest addicted to idolatry, and the fit representative of all the people;" **what have I any more to do with idols?** "a dialogistic parallelism."

EPHRAIM.—What have I any more to do with idols?

GOD.—I have heard him and observed him.

EPHRAIM.—I am like a green fir tree.

GOD.—From me is thy fruit found.—*Manger*.

The *I* here is contrasted with *idols*; the *me* with the *fir tree*, or cypress, which, though tall, fair, and green, is not fruit-bearing. God gives not only refreshment, but rich supplies. (9.) **Who is wise**, the conclusion to the whole book. The question gives energy to the truths conveyed, the whole contrasting the states of the godly and the wicked. Ps. 1.—*Henderson*. The plainest instructions, however, will profit those only who prayerfully study God's word and obediently follow his will.

QUESTIONS.

On Facts to be Remembered.—What kingdom have we studied about this year? What *oral* prophecy preceded *written*? Who were the first prophets after Elijah and Elisha? What scenes did they depict? What did God through them urge his people to do?

On Hosea.—To what kingdom did Hosea minister? When? Why is he placed first in the order of minor prophets? Why are they called minor prophets? Can you name them as they are arranged in the Bible? Who were the major prophets? Can you give them in order? What does the book of Hosea comprise? What is its chief burden? If its foreground is

dark, what is its distant view? By what future considerations are the hopes of the church sustained to-day?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. To what moral condition does Hosea desire to bring Israel? If sinners are lost, whom have they most to blame? Hos. 13 : 9.
- V. 2. Why does Hosea urge Israel to return to God with words? May he not have meant realities instead of professions? Are *silent* prayers as profitable as *oral* ones? May not ministers put the language of prayer upon inquirers' lips? What is meant by "the calves of the lips"?
- V. 3. Who is Assur? What is meant by "Assur will not save us"? What by "we will not ride upon horses"? What gods were the work of Israel's hands? Who are meant here by "the fatherless"?
- V. 4. On condition of this repentance of Israel, what does God say he will do?
- V. 5-7. To what will this revival in Israel be like? Will you show how the symbolism of the dew is appropriate to such times? Of the lily? Of the roots of Lebanon? Of the olive tree? What is meant by "they that dwell under his shadow shall return"? What by "revive as the corn"?
- V. 8. Why is it well for Ephraim thus to speak? When the leaders in sin turn to God, will not others soon follow? What contrasts have we in this verse? Did Israel heed them?
- V. 9. To what is this last verse a fit conclusion? What states are contrasted in it? What Psalm does it remind us of? Ps. 1. [P. S. Let whole school read this first Psalm in closing.]

Reflection.—Our lesson has been upon "The Promise of Revival." We have seen what this promise involves of real repentance and turning to the Lord, and what divine blessings follow in the loveliness, glory, extension, stability, and power of the people of God. It is a passage of great beauty and suggestiveness. There are teachings in it for our times, as well as for those of Hosea. "All that is Jewish is not found in Judaism, nor all that is heathenish found in heathendom."—*Hackett*.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help."—HOSEA 13 : 9.

June 17.]

LESSON XII.

THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.—2 Kings 17:6-18. B. C. 721.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 13-18.

6 ¶ In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods,

8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9 And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

The Captivity of the Kingdom of Israel.—This occurred B. C. 721, after a three years' siege of the city of Samaria, under Shalmaneser and Sargon, his successor, kings of Assyria. It was the despairing effort of a dying nation, a memorable defence, but all in vain. The removal of the people was of that complete character frequently practiced by the conquerors of Western Asia. Josephus states that the king of Assyria transplanted all the people. Not a remnant was left, as in the case of the captivity of Judah a century and a half later, when the poor of the land were left to be vinedressers and husbandmen. *The ten tribes* never returned to their land as a distinct people, and the contrast between their fate and that of Judah marks the favor of God to the house of David and to the people who never cast off his worship. Thus ended the kingdom of Israel after a duration of just two hundred and fifty-four years (B. C. 975-721), under nineteen kings and seven dynasties, not one of which kings is commended either for morality or piety, all being idolaters and traitors to Jehovah. They departed not from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 17:22), notwithstanding their nearness to the temple and the succession of inspired prophets. Humanly speaking, it was a great advantage to the Assyrian king to remove a people on the border of his empire notoriously well affected toward Egypt. With God, however, it was the fulfilment of threatenings long before uttered in the event of the disobedience of his people. Lev. 26:36-39, 44; Deut. 4:27; 28:20-68. It was distinctly foretold that they should be removed and scattered into the uttermost parts of the earth. Jer. 15:4; Ezek. 12:10-16; Hos. 9:17. First under Sargon, of Assyria, B. C. 721, then under Nebuchadnezzar, of Babylon, B. C. 685, then under Titus, of Rome, A. D. 70, the absolute *dispersion* of the Jews was brought about. It is a case without a parallel. And yet the Jews survive in their *dispersion* as no distinct people have ever done *in their own country*. It is a standing miracle. It shows prophecy fulfilled. It is with many the greatest evidence of Christianity. See "Illustration" at the close of the lesson. The dispersion wonderfully prepared the way for apostolic Christianity in scattering synagogues over the Grecian world. Attempts have been made to find descendants of the ten tribes at the foot of the Himalayas, on the coast of Malabar, among the Nestorians of Abyssinia, in the Indians of North America, and the Anglo-Saxon race. Into the other controversy, respecting the return of Israel to their own land, this is not the place to enter. For the present we are to see only the completeness of their captivity, according to God's word and the images of his prophet Hosea. ch. 13:3; 10:7.

"Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
They are gone, and FOR EVER."

ANALYSIS.

- I. The captivity, v. 6.
- II. Idolatry its leading cause, vs. 7-12.
- III. Protest of prophets against it, 13.
- IV. Disobedience persisted in, 14-17.
- V. Delayed retribution comes, v. 18.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	2 Kings 17:1-18.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 7; Lev. 26:21-48.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 7; Deut. 28:20-59.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 15; 2 Pet. 2.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 18; 2 Kgs. 17:19-41.
<i>Sat.</i>	Ezek. 12:1-16.
<i>Sun.</i>	Rom. 11.

EXPLANATIONS.—(6.) of **Hoshea**, son of Elah (v. 1), the nineteenth and last king of Israel established in the kingdom (B. C. 730); the best king in the whole line from Jeroboam. But the state was past redemption. **the king of Assyria**, Sargon, as appears from Assyrian inscriptions, the builder of the famous palace of Khorsabad, who records the capture of Samaria thus: "Samaria I looked at, I captured" (like Cæsar's *vidi, vici*), "27,280 men (or families) who dwelt in it I carried away."—*Smith's Hist.* The Trans-Jordanic tribes had been carried away previously by *Tiglath-Pileser*, king of Assyria. Later in Sargon's reign he probably effected the wholesale depopulation of Israel, mentioned in this verse. **took Samaria**, the proud hill-city and capital of Israel; **by the river of Gozan** (Gauzanitis), flowing from the far east into the Tigris, and so on to the great Euphrates. The place of the captivity, as here recorded, was beyond both of these rivers, in the remotest provinces of the Assyrian empire, Nineveh, the magnificent capital of Assyria, being far to the north-west of the captives of Israel. (7.) **For so it was**, rather, "And so it was because;" a statement of the reasons of the captivity. The historian cites three leading ones: (1) idolatry, vs. 7-12; (2) rejection of God's prophets, vs. 13, 14; (3) disregard of God's statutes, vs. 15, 16. (8.) **in the statutes of the heathen, . . . and of the kings of Israel**, two phases of idolatry, foreign and native. (9.) **did secretly**—*i. e.*, they glossed their sins over, dissembled, did not openly acknowledge their apostasy; alike in the most populous and in the most desolate regions. (11.) See Hos. 2: 13; 4: 13; 11: 2; Isa. 65: 3, 7. (13.) **Yet the Lord**, still willing to be gracious; **and by all the seers**, "official members of the prophetic order only."—*Hävernicks*. **Turn ye**, the great burden of their utterance. (16.) **host of heaven**, star-worship, not hitherto mentioned as practised by the Israelites. See Deut. 4: 19; 17: 3. (17.) See 2 Kings 17: 30, 31; Deut. 18: 10, 11; 1 Kings 21: 20. (18.) **but the tribe of Judah only**, her captivity being mercifully delayed, and yet sure to follow, since God dealt with both kingdoms finally alike, save in this, that part of Judah was to return to Palestine, *Israel never*, Samaria being colonized by people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avah, Hamath, and Sepharvaim (v. 24), from whom the Samaritans so called were in part descended. Hence their hostility to the returned Jews. Ezra 4: 4, 5; John 4: 9.

QUESTIONS.

On the Captivity of Israel.—When did the captivity of Israel occur? Under what king? After what siege? How completely did he take Israel captive? Did the ten tribes ever return to Palestine? Where has it been thought their descendants were to be found? From the sins of what king did Israel never depart? How many years did the kingdom of Israel last? How many kings did it have in this time? How many dynasties? Why was it politically advantageous to Assyria to carry the Jews into captivity? What did it, however, providentially fulfil? Why have the Jews all through the ages of their dispersion maintained their national character? What case can you cite parallel with it? Of what is it an undeniable evidence?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 6. What king of Israel was Hoshea? Why were his patriotic efforts in preserving his country unsuccessful? When does forbearance cease to be a virtue? Where has Sargon, the king of Assyria, recorded the captivity of Israel? Was the depopulation of Israel at first complete? When was it so? To what provinces of Assyria were the captives carried? By what river? In what direction from them was Nineveh?
- V. 7. Will you state some of the reasons why the kingdom of Israel was carried into captivity? What ten or eleven phases of idolatry are recorded against it in vs. 9, 10, 11, 16, 17?
- V. 18. Why does the historian say that none was "left but Judah only"? Under what successive Assyrian kings did Judah afterward share Israel's fate? Ans. *Sennacherib* (2 Kings 18:13-16), *Esar-haddon* (2 Chron. 33:11), and *Nebuchadnezzar* thrice. How many years, then, did the kingdom of Judah last? Ans. 390 (B. C. 975-585). How many years did we say the kingdom of Israel lasted? Ans. 254 (B. C. 975-721). What, then, was the difference in the length of the two kingdoms? Ans. 136 years. What was the one great cause of their common ruin? See Golden Text.

Illustration.—"A skeptical prince once asked his chaplain to give him some clear evidence of the truth of Christianity, but to do so in a few words, because a king had not much time to spare for such matters. The chaplain tersely replied, 'The Jews, your majesty.' How convincing this evidence! In all the continents, amid all the races of the world, we meet with the nation, to which there clings an unexpiated, self-imprecated guilt."—*Liddon's Bampton Lectures on "Divinity of Christ,"* p. 97.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God."—2 KINGS 18:12.



June 24.] LESSON XIII.

SECOND QUARTER REVIEW.—Nahum 1:1-13. B. C. 714.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 3-7.

1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth and *is* furious: the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies.

3 The Lord *is* slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*; the Lord *hath* his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet.

4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth *is* burnt at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

7 The Lord *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and he knoweth them that trust in him.

8 But with an over-running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

9 What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end; afflictions shall not rise up the second time.

10 For while *they be* folden together *as* thorns, and while they are drunken *as* drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.

11 There *is one* come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor.

12 Thus saith the LORD, Though *they be* quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.

13 For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder.

The Prophecy of Nahum.—Nahum is the last of the great series of Israelitish prophets. His personal history is quite unknown. Some put his native place in Galilee, some in Assyria. The date of his prophecy can be determined with as little precision as his native place. It is probable, however, that it was written in the reign of Hezekiah, a century before the downfall of Nineveh: in this De Wette, Winer, and Henderson agree. The burden of his prophecy is the destruction of the city of Nineveh—a city at the very time of the prophecy of vast extent and population, and the centre of the principal commerce of the world. (See Explanations on v. 1, Lesson VIII., May 20.) The doom which Jonah had pronounced was delayed by the penitence of the people. But their repeated and aggravated sins brought upon them at last an irrevocable sentence, and so totally was the city destroyed that in the second century after Christ not a vestige remained of it, and its very site was a matter of doubt and uncertainty until it was discovered several years ago by Botta and Layard. The date of the fall of Nineveh is about B. C. 610.

The book of Nahum is surpassed by none in the Old Testament in elegance of language or sublimity of description. "It is one sustained shout of wild exultation that the oppressor has fallen at last. The naked, disrowned corpse of the glorious city is cast out to the scorn and disgust of the world. No spark of pity mingles with the prophet's delight."—Stanley's *Jew. Ch.*, 2d series, pp. 412, 413. It must have been a book of great comfort to believing Jews, in some measure what the Apocalypse was to the early Christians. There is nothing in it strictly Messianic, but it is exceedingly valuable "because it illustrates so signally the law of retribution according to which God deals with nations, and the fidelity with which he fulfils his promises and threatenings to the righteous and the wicked."—Hackett on *Nahum*; *Smith's Dict.* The words of the prophet were verified to the letter. This prophecy is now the best history we have of fallen Nineveh.

"And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsnorted by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. The doom of Nineveh proclaimed, v. 1.	Mon. Nahum 1.
II. Formal preface to the prophecy, vs. 1-8.	Tues. " 2.
III. A striking contrast, vs. 7, 8.	Wed. " 3.
IV. Assyrian plots are vain, vs. 9-12.	Thurs. Zeph. 2.
V. God's people comforted, vs. 12, 13.	Fri. v. 9; Ps. 2.
	Sat. v. 11; 2 Kings 19: 20-37.
	Sun. Ps. 103.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **The burden of Nineveh**, rather the "sentence," the "doom;" (2.) "The formal preface, which begins here and reaches to v. 8, is highly magnif-

icent. The repeated use of Jehovah, the incommunicable name, adds awful solemnity to the commencement. Nothing can exceed in grandeur or sublimity the description which the prophet furnishes of the divine character. The attributes of infinite purity, inflexible rectitude, irresistible power, and boundless goodness, set forth and illustrated by images borrowed from the history of the Hebrews, the scenery of Palestine, and the more astounding phenomena of nature, present a view of God worthy of the profoundest reverence, the most unbounded confidence, and the most intense love."—*Henderson*; **God is jealous**, describing a feeling of injured right (see Refs. Ex. 20 : 15); **the Lord revengeth**, Nahum does not forget that Assyria has oppressed his people; **reserveth wrath**, see Rom. 2 : 5, 6; 2 Pet. 2 : 9. (3.) **will not acquit**, see Num. 14 : 18; **the clouds are the dust of his feet**, exceedingly sublime; **Bashan**, across the Jordan, rich in pasturage; **Carmel**, celebrated for cornfields; **flower of Lebanon**, the bloom of its forests. (5.) **is burned**, or heaveth. (7, 8.) "There is a marked antithesis in these verses, by which the prophet arrives at his main topic, the destruction of Nineveh. Verse 7 depicts the safety of all who trust God. Ps. 1 : 6; 144 : 3; Amos 3 : 2. Verse 8 describes the triumphant progress of the Medo-Babylonian troops when advancing toward Nineveh;" **the place thereof**—*i. e.*, Nineveh, announcing its utter destruction. (9.) "By a sudden apostrophe the prophet here turns to the Assyrians, and boldly challenges their temerity in daring to oppose Jehovah, announces their complete overthrow and inability to annoy God's people again." (10.) **folden . . . as thorns**—*i. e.*, as a thicket, forming an impenetrable front to those who would enter it; **drunken as drunkards**, literally, "soaked," and "so prepared to resist the action of fire."—*Henderson*. Diodorus states that the last and fatal assault upon Nineveh was when the inhabitants were overcome with wine. (11.) **one come out of thee**—*i. e.*, Sennacherib, come out of Nineveh for an assault upon the people of God. (12.) **Though they be quiet**, perfect in strength, powerful, innumerable; **yet thus**, as above described; **afflicted thee**—*i. e.*, Jerusalem, or Judah. The downfall and final overthrow of Nineveh were brought on by the successive assaults of neighboring kingdoms, particularly Babylon, when the kingdom of Assyria was politically weak. Having fallen with the empire, Nineveh never rose again. It was abandoned at once, and suffered

to perish utterly. "She is empty and void and waste." Nah. 2:10.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience stands he waiting,
With exactness grinds he all."—*Longfellow*.

QUESTIONS.

On the Prophecy of Nahum—Who was Nahum? Where was his native place? What was the time of his prophecy? Before what event must it have been written? In what condition of prosperity was Nineveh at the time Nabum pronounced its doom? Would a man be apt to guess at so much exact truth? How, then, did Nahum know it so long beforehand? 2 Pet. 1:21. For what was the doom of Nineveh in the time of Jonah delayed? Why did its irrevocable doom come at last? What is the limit of sinning between God's patience and his wrath? How many centuries before Christ was Nineveh destroyed? How thorough was its destruction? Nahum 1:8, 14; 2:8, 10; 3:6, 7, 13; Zeph. 2:13-15. For what literary merits is the book of Nahum unsurpassed? Of what does Stanley call it "one sustained shout"? What does Nahum's prophecy signally illustrate?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. What is the meaning of "burden" in this verse?
- V. 2. Why these repetitions of the name of Jehovah? Why is God jealous of his people? Why is God's *reserved* wrath to be dreaded? Why, then, should we not slight God's patience? Rom. 2:4, 5.
- V. 3. In some men's opinions God is all love; what was Nahum's opinion? Do you know of any such sublime description of Jehovah in literature as in this and the following verses?
- Vs. 7, 8. What striking contrasts have we in these verses? To what does this "overrunning flood" possibly allude? Ans. *To the entrance of the invaders through Nineveh's river-gates, or to an inundation of the river Tigris and its tributaries.* How long has absolute darkness rested upon Nineveh? How was its overthrow brought on? See Explanations, v. 12.
- V. 9. What Psalm do these words suggest? See and read Ps. 2:1-4. Against whom will not affliction rise up a second time?
- V. 11. What Assyrian king greatly troubled God's people? When did he make war with Judah? (B. C. 710.) With what result? 2 Kings 19:35. Who was Assyria's last king? Ans. *Saracus* (B. C. 639-608).
- V. 12. How could God use the Assyrians in accomplishing the captivity of his people, and afterward punish them for so doing? Ps. 76:10. Where have we seen, in this quarter's lessons, God's wonderful mercy? His terri-

ble justice? Can any man or nation sin against him with impunity? What example should keep them from pride? Ans. *Zeph. 2:15. Let the whole school, in closing, read it.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

“The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.”—**NAHUM 1:3.**

“Oh, where are kings and empires now
Of old that went and came?
But, Lord, thy church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same.”—*Coxe.*

STUDIES IN THE ACTS.

THIRD QUARTER.

July 1.]

LESSON I.

PAUL IN CYPRUS.—Acts 13 : 1-13. A. D. 45.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 8-12.

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man: who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul (who also *is called* Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

The Setting of the Lesson.—The book of the Acts of the Apostles naturally falls into two parts, the former of which, studied last year, relates to the formation and early progress of the church, chiefly among the Jews, by the ministry of *Peter* (ch. 1-12); the latter part, to be studied this year, relates to the extension of the church among the Gentiles principally by the ministry of Paul (ch. 13-28). The centre of Peter's ministry was at Jerusalem. Now, however, the historian transfers the centre of the aggressive church to Antioch, in Northern Syria. From this city it is to take its departure for the conquest of paganism. The magnitude of the endeavor is evident from the strength of ancient polytheism. It is the established religion which it is the avowed purpose of Christianity among the Gentiles to overthrow. The people are attached to it by local and national vanity; build temples; hold festivals, cruel and sanguinary; employ jugglers, diviners, magicians, to impose upon the credulous; utilize the trades, as that of Demetrius at Ephesus; teach mysteries, to excite the hopes of the pure and lofty-minded, all for the perpetual maintenance of the established polytheistic religion. It was this which Christianity attempted to bring into everlasting discredit and final subjection to the love of the one God, revealed in Jesus Christ. And Christianity brought this result to pass. Hold this picture of paganism, therefore, before the eye as Paul starts forth on his first missionary tour. (See Tables at end of this work.)

The Synagogue in its Relation to Christianity.—The synagogue was the great characteristic institution or miniature temple of the later phase of Judaism. The Jews had one or more synagogues in wellnigh every town and city of their dispersion. It was in the synagogue of Nazareth our Saviour in youth and opening manhood went to worship. The synagogue preserved the Jewish faith and order. But it did more. In the providence of God it prepared the way for the introduction of Christianity to the Gentile world. To the first preachers of Christianity the synagogue afforded a pulpit and an audience. See Acts 13: 15. The synagogue service brought together not only Jews, but Gentiles in no small number—proselytes, more open than the Jews, however, to the principles of Christianity. It was under the influence of the synagogue that the Greek language assumed the peculiar character which fitted it so wonderfully to be the vehicle of Christian teaching; hence, the idiom of the New Testament writers and the new words in new connections and senses which the language of Xenophon could not well express. "It is not easy," says Prof. James Hadley of Yale College, "to overestimate the value of these preparations and opportunities for the preaching of the gospel, since among the causes which by divine arrangement paved the way for the spread of the gospel we may claim as high a place for the general planting of the Jewish synagogue as for the universal diffusion of the Greek language, or for the unifying conquests of the Roman empire."

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul and Barnabas set apart, vs. 1-3.
- II. First stages of their journey, vs. 4-6.
- III. A sorcerer at Paphos punished, vs. 6-12.
- IV. Journey continued, v. 12.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 13: 1-13.
Tues. v. 2; Acts 26: 9-21.
Wed. v. 2; Heb. 5: 4-14.
Thurs. v. 5; 1 Cor. 12: 4-31.
Fri. v. 6; Acts 8: 9-25.
Sat. v. 11; Mark 16: 9-20.
Sun. Ps. 72.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **At Antioch**, the one on the *Orontes*, in Syria, about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, and 30 from the Mediterranean Sea (see Q. Book for 1876, p. 172); **prophets**, not simply prophetic with regard to future events, but gifted with power of “*exalted and superhuman teaching.*” This is prophecy in the usual New Testament sense; **teachers**—*i. e.*, tutors, less than prophets, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; **as Barnabas**, see Acts 4 : 36 ; 11 : 19-30 ; **Simeon**, better *Symeon*, “evidently a Jew ;” **Niger**, black, a familiar name with the Romans ; **Manaen**, occurs only here ; **brought up with**, or the foster-brother of, the Herod who put to death John the Baptist. How different the lives of these two foster-brothers, nursed at the same breast ! **the tetrarch**, a governor of the fourth part of a Roman province ; **and Saul**, the last mentioned, soon to be first. (2.) **ministered**, in general worship, especially in teaching ; **fasted**, as in preparation for special divine influences ; possibly in the settlement of the question, What is to be done for the Gentiles ? Fastings are much less esteemed nowadays than is proper ; **the Holy Ghost said**, to the church through one of the prophets named ; **separate me**—*i. e.*, for me, the Holy Spirit ; **for the work whereunto I have called them**, the nature of which begins to be stated in v. 4. Compare Rom. 1 : 1 ; 10 : 15 ; Eph. 3 : 7, 8 ; Matt. 9 : 38. (3.) **laid hands on them**. See ch. 6 : 6. (4.) **unto Seleucia**, fifteen miles from Antioch, on the *Orontes*, and five miles from its mouth ; **from thence to Cyprus**, for these reasons : (1) its nearness to the mainland ; (2) it was the native place of Barnabas (ch. 4 : 33), whose heart gave direction to the vessel ; (3) its honorable mention already in gospel history ; (4) some of its inhabitants were already Christians. ch. 11 : 12, 20. Cyprus is less than 100 miles from the coast of Syria. Its length is 140 miles, its width about 50 ; (5.) **at Salamis**, on the eastern shore of the island, nearest to Syria ; **to their minister**—*i. e.*, assistant ; (6.) **through the isle**, literally, “the whole isle ;” **to Paphos**, then the residence of the Roman proconsul ; the Paphian goddess was Venus ; **a sorcerer**, a fortune-teller, one of a class patronized by the Romans, by Marius, Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar. “The astrologers and sorcerers,” says Tacitus, “are a class of men who will always be discarded and always cherished.” (7.) **with the deputy**—*i. e.*, the proconsul acting for the consul as governor of this Roman province ; **Sergius Paulus**, of whom nothing fur-

ther is known; **prudent**—*i. e.*, intelligent. (8.) **but Elymas**, an Arabic title signifying “the wise one,” the magian. (9.) **who also is called Paul**, the origin of this name is in dispute; the best reason suggested seems to be that from the first the apostle may have been known as *Saul* among the Jews and *Paul* among foreigners, two names being very common in that age. It was fitting to take the Gentile name at this stage of his ministry. (12.) **saw what was done believed**, so do obstacles removed become helps to faith. (13.) **and his company**, there is a trace here (Alford) of the narrator, Luke. Barnabas henceforth is in the background; **came to Perga**, about one hundred miles north-west from Paphos, on the river Cestrus, seven miles inland from *Attalia*, so coming into Asia Minor; **and John**—*i. e.*, Mark (see ch. 12 : 12); **returned to Jerusalem**, probably from unsteadiness of character or fear of future peril. Matthew Henry pithily says, “*Either he did not like the work, or he wanted to go and see his mother.*”

QUESTIONS.

On the Setting of the Lesson.—About what does the first part of the Acts teach us? About what does the second part? Who is prominent in the first part? Who in the second? What was the local centre of the church in the first part? From what city did Christianity now set forth? What did it propose to accomplish? Will you describe the strength of paganism then? Will mere human power overthrow it? Zech. 4 : 6; 2 Cor. 10 : 4.

On the Synagogue.—What was the synagogue? How generally was it in use among the Jews? What did the synagogue do for the world besides preserving the Jewish faith? To what persons did it offer a pulpit and an audience? What language did the synagogue furnish to Christian teaching? What may be said of the synagogue as employed by the providence of God? What is meant by special providence? For whom are all things created? Col. 1 : 16, 17.

On Bible Lesson.—

V. 1. Why is it correct to say “the church that was at Antioch”? Why is it wrong to say the church of Boston, of New York, or of New Orleans? What was the difference between the “prophets” and “teachers” spoken of in this verse? What have we learned of Barnabas? Where did we first find Saul? Acts 7 : 58. Where have we seen him since then?

V. 2. What was this ministering to the Lord? Ought fasting to be so neglected as it is? What being now directs

the cause of Christ in the earth? When may men run into the ministry of the gospel before they are sent? What is a call to the ministry? To what special work were *these* two men called? ch. 14: 26, 27.

- V. 3. Does "the laying on of hands" convey any new spiritual gift? Of what is it symbolic?
- V. 4. Where was Seleucia? Why did these men sail thence to Cyprus? In what direction was their course? How far was the island from Seleucia? How long was this island? How wide?
- V. 5. At what port did they land? Where was this city? In what place did the apostles at once preach? Why in the synagogues? Who was their assistant? How was he related to Barnabas? Ans. *A cousin*, not "*sister's son*," as in Col. 4: 10. See Alford.
- V. 6. What is the literal of "through the isle"? Who resided at Paphos? Who was the Paphian goddess? What was the special business of this sorcerer referred to in this verse? By whom was this class patronized? Are all such "fools" dead?
- V. 7. What was a "deputy of the country" then? What is meant by "a prudent man"? Why did he call for Barnabas and Saul?
- V. 8. What is the meaning of Elymas? Why did he withstand the apostles?
- V. 9. Why is Saul now and hereafter called Paul? With what is Paul filled?
- V. 10. In what respect was Elymas a child (son) of the devil? John 8: 44.
- V. 11. Why was this punishment inflicted upon him to be suffered for a season only? Ans. *The design was not so much to punish as to convert.*—*Chrysostom*.
- V. 12. What effect did this miracle produce upon the proconsul? What was there in the doctrine of the Lord to astonish him?
- V. 13. Whither now do these missionaries take their course? How far away is Perga? How far inland? Who breaks away from the missionary party? Why? What verse is suggested? Luke 9: 62.

Closing Questions.—In reviewing the lesson, who, as we have learned, calls men to Christian work? How does the Holy Spirit teach us our duties now? Will you state the places already passed in Paul's first missionary tour?

Note.—The superintendent should appoint some one every Sunday to point out on the maps the journeyings of the apostles from their start, either on their first, second, or third missionary tour, up to that Sunday's lesson. Dr. Hackett did this persistently with his students. Superintendents can do the same. It can all be done in words like these, "From Antioch to Seleucia, thence to Salamis on the island of Cyprus, thence through the isle to Paphos, thence to Perga." A fuller review would be to state in brief what happened at each place.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

—Acts 13:12.

July 8.]

LESSON II.

PAUL AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA.—Acts 13:26-41. A.D. 45.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 38-41.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets:

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Antioch in Pisidia.—Why Paul so soon left Perga is not known. It may have been because the warm season in the lowlands between the coast and the highlands was at this very time unendurable—so much so that he found the inhabitants of Perga flocking to northern resorts. Striking, then, north-easterly, Paul came to the Pisidian highlands. These were thousands of feet above the level of the sea, forming the lofty table-land of Asia Minor. The ascent to these highlands from the coast is often through narrow passes with frowning cliffs, fit haunts for marauding mountaineers and robbers. Here, too, the rivers have an uncertain flow, now almost dry, now swollen as in an hour or day. Here Paul was quite likely to encounter the very trials he afterward wrote about—"perils of rivers and perils of robbers." 2 Cor. 11:26. Antioch in Pisidia, founded, like the Antioch in Syria, by *Seleucus Nicator*, became a Roman colony, and was called *Cæsarea*. It was north-east from Perga in Pamphylia about a hundred miles, situated midway on the great road between the *Ægean* Sea and Cilicia and Syria. It was inhabited by Greeks, largely, however, by Romans, and by some Jews, added to native Pisidians. The Jews were not numerous, however, as they appear to have had but one synagogue; still, they were an influential body. Full liberty of worship according to their faith was given to them, as, indeed, to all Jews throughout the Roman empire. They went, therefore, on the sabbath days into their modest synagogue, the women having a separate gallery behind a partition of lattice-work. The desk was in the centre, from which the reader read the Book of the Law distinctly, and gave the sense. The eyes of all, sitting on seats placed around the room, were fastened on the reader or speaker. The ruler or rulers of the synagogue sat on "chief seats" that faced the congregation. After the Manuscript was read and expounded it was returned to the Ark, that was placed on the side nearest to Jerusalem and kept carefully closed. Then followed a pause, during which strangers or learned men who had any words of consolation or exhortation rose and addressed the meeting. To such a meeting Paul and Barnabas went, wearing the *Tahith*, or badge of an Israelite, and sat down with the rest. The prayers were recited, the Law and the Prophets were read, the Book, or Manuscript, was returned to the Ark, and then the rulers of the synagogue asked the strangers to speak to their fellow-Israelites. Paul answered the invitation gladly and promptly. He rose, and with the animated and emphatic gesture which he used on other occasions "*beckoned with his hand.*" v. 16. Luke gives us the substance of his address. He dwells upon the previous history of the Jewish people, as Stephen had done before him. He seeks to conciliate his hearers by proving to them that the Messiah they longed for was the Messiah he preached, and he founds upon the whole an offer of salvation and a warning against despising the gospel. Our lesson is upon the latter portion of his address.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Christ proved to be the Messiah, vs. 26-37.
 (a) By his rejection by the Jews, vs. 26-29.
 (b) By his resurrection, v. 31.
 (c) So explaining the promises, vs. 32-37.
 II. An offer of salvation, vs. 38, 39.
 III. A warning to despisers, vs. 40, 41.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	Acts 13: 14-41.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 26; Rom. 1: 1-17.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 29; John 19: 23-37.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 31; 1 Cor. 15: 1-11.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 33; Ps. 2: 16.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 38; Luke 24: 36-53.
<i>SUN.</i>	v. 39; Gal. 3: 8-29.

EXPLANATIONS.—(26.) **stock of Abraham, and whosoever**, Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. See v. 16; Rom. 1: 5. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Rom. 1: 16. **to you**—*i. e.*, to you all; **the word of this salvation is sent**, the salvation which is preached by Jesus. (27.) **because they knew him not**, or "not knowing him, or failing to recognize him, and not having known the voices of the prophets, yet by condemning him they have fulfilled the voices of the prophets." See ch. 3: 17; Luke 23: 34; 1 Cor. 2: 8. **they have fulfilled them**, see Luke 24: 20, 26, 27, 44. (28.) **found no cause of death in him**, see Mark 15: 13, 14; John 19: 6, 15. (29.) **fulfilled all**, see John 19: 28, 30, 36, 37. (31.) Having spoken of what *men* did to Christ, Paul hastens to say what *God* did for him; the Cross does not detain him as long as the Resurrection. The resurrection is the fulfilment of prophecy and the seal of the Messiahship of Jesus. **But God raised him from the dead**, compare ch. 2: 23, 24; 3: 14, 15, etc.; **who are his witnesses**, rather who are *now*, at this very moment, his living witnesses. (32.) **And we**, in view of these proofs that Jesus is the Messiah (see vs. 23, 25, 27, 31); **the promise which was made unto the fathers**, see Gen. 3: 15; 12: 3; 22: 18; Rom. 4: 13. (33.) **raised up Jesus again**—*i. e.*, from the grave. See 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4, 15; 1 Thess. 1: 10. Paul's idea is that the resurrection was the great moment in Christ's history when he was inaugurated as the rightful Sovereign of men, according to the second Psalm. (34.) **sure mercies of David**, Isa. 55: 3. (35.) **not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption**, clearly not fulfilled in David, but in Christ only. (36.) **was laid unto his fathers**, *lit.* "added," "an expression that

recognizes the existence of the soul in a future state. Gesenius says that it is distinguished expressly both from death and burial in Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 2 Kings 22:20."—*Hackett*. (38.) **therefore**—*i. e.*, in consideration of this proof that Christ is the Messiah; **the forgiveness of sins**, procured by him. See 10:36; Luke 24:47. (39.) **justified from all things**—*i. e.*, all sins, whereas the law justifies from nothing. Notice, (1) Christ's forgiveness is not partial, but extends to all the sins of the transgressor; (2) all men need it, since no other way of pardon remains for those who are condemned by the law; (3) since faith in Christ is the only condition annexed to it, this salvation is free to all.—*Hackett*. (40.) **spoken of**, Heb. 1:5, a free citation. As with the fathers, Paul says it will be with the Jews of his day, if they continue in unbelief.

QUESTIONS.

On Antioch in Pisidia.—What was the probable reason why Paul left Perga for Antioch? In what direction and how far was this inland? On what great thoroughfare? What was the danger incurred in going up to the Pisidian highlands? How does Paul possibly refer to it? By whom was Antioch in Pisidia built? By whom was it at this time inhabited? To what place does Paul at once go for public worship after reaching Antioch? Where did the women sit in the synagogue? Where was the desk placed? What portions of the Scriptures were read? Where was the manuscript kept? After the usual services what courtesy did the rulers of the synagogue extend to strangers? How did Paul accept of it? Upon what history does his address dwell? How does he seek to conciliate his hearers?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 26. By what words does Paul address the Jews? By what the Gentiles? Why does he include Gentiles with Jews in his appeal? What is meant by "the word of this salvation"?
- V. 27. To what sad event does Paul now refer? Upon whom does he charge the blame of the crucifixion? What is meant by "they know him not"? Acts 2:23, 36, 37; 1 Cor. 2:8. What is meant by "voices of the prophets"? Why were the Jews blamable for their ignorance?
- V. 28. What is meant by "no cause of death"? On what ground did the Jews desire Pilate to put Christ to death? Luke 22:70, 71; 23:1, 2.
- V. 29. Who took Jesus down from the cross? John 19:38, 39.
- V. 30. Man has done all he can do against Christ; what now does God do for him?

- V. 31. For how many days was Jesus seen after his resurrection? Can you name some of his appearances to his disciples? 1 Cor. 15 : 5-9. What were these disciples after the resurrection qualified to be? Is the blessing of Christianity confined to those who saw Christ in the flesh? John 19 : 29; 1 Pet. 1 : 8.
- V. 32. How does Paul describe the gospel? What promises were fulfilled in Jesus? How old is Christianity?
- V. 34. How was Christ's resurrection different from that of Lazarus?
- V. 36. What is meant by "fell on sleep"? What by "laid unto his fathers"? Does not this recognize the existence of a soul in a future state?
- V. 38. In passing from *history* to *doctrine* what blessed truth does Paul now teach?
- V. 39. There were some sins, such as idolatry, murder, which the Jewish code could not pardon; what sins will not Jesus forgive? Will the gospel save us if we have no faith in it? What three truths have we in these verses?
- V. 40. What is Paul's caution in his closing words? Against what should we all be on our guard?

The Doctrine of Justification Stated.—*"Having broken God's law, we cannot justify ourselves before him, but if we penitently confess our sinfulness, and trust in the atonement of Christ for our sins, instead of trusting to our own merits, then, for Christ's sake, God will accept us, and grant us his favor as freely as if we had never sinned."*
—Dr. Hague.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And we declare unto you glad tidings."—Acts 13 : 32.

July 15.] LESSON III.

TURNING TO THE GENTILES.—Acts 13 : 42-52. B. C. 45.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 44-48.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

The Divine Plan Carried Forward.—Paul's first address in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia made a deep and thrilling impression on his audience. While the congregation were pouring out of the synagogue, many of them crowded round the speaker, begging that these words which had moved their deepest feelings might be preached to them the next Sabbath. To this clinging group of Jews and Gentile proselytes Paul and Barnabas spoke tenderly, persuading them "to continue in the grace of God." During the week the new teachers were much talked about in Pisidia; their new doctrines were noised abroad, so that on the following Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. The synagogue was crowded. Multitudes of Gentiles, in addition to the proselytes, were present. This was more than the Jews could bear. Their spiritual pride and bigotry were roused. They could not admit that the Gentiles were entitled to the same religious privileges with themselves. Instead of realizing that as a prophetic nation they had achieved a great work, they indulged the self-exalted opinion that God's highest blessings were for themselves alone. Their dispersions had not rooted out this deep-seated prejudice, but rather brought to them comfort in isolation, and so they tenaciously held to their exclusive nationality. Thus in Pisidian Antioch they who on one Sabbath had listened with breathless interest to the teachers who spoke of the promised Messiah, were on the next Sabbath filled with the utmost indignation when they learned that this Messiah was a "*light to lighten the Gentiles*," as well as the "*glory of his people Israel*." They made an uproar and opposed the words of Paul with all manner of severe expressions, "contradicting and blaspheming."—*How on.* Then a systematic persecution, intensified by the controlling influence of women, was excited against Paul and Barnabas, and, for the present at least, expelled them from the colonial limits. It was not, however, without leaving

to Pisidia a large church of united Jews and Gentiles, "the first Catholic brotherhood," as Mr. Tate says, "gathered in part from idolatrous Gentiles."

ANALYSIS.

- I. Result of first Sabbath's work, vs. 42-43.
- II. The next Sabbath's audience, v. 44.
- III. Jewish prejudice aroused, v. 45.
- IV. The gospel for the Gentiles, vs. 46-49.
- V. First experience of persecution, vs. 50, 51.
- VI. Joy of Pisidian Christians, v. 52.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	Acts 13 : 42-52.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 45 ; Deut. 20-30.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 46 ; Luke 2 : 25-35.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 47 ; Rom. 9 : 14-26.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 48 ; Rom. 8 : 28-39.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 51 ; Luke 10 : 1-16.
<i>SUN.</i>	v. 52 ; Matt. 5 : 1-12.

EXPLANATIONS.—(42.) **Were gone out**, the best reading is "And when they went out they besought." The invitation was a general one. (43.) **religious proselytes**, come-outers from heathenism into the Jewish religion; **in the grace of God**, a peculiarly Pauline expression. 1 Cor. 15 : 10 ; 2 Cor. 6 : 1 ; Gal. 2 : 21. "The grace of God" is the gospel, the great undeserved favor sinners receive from God. (45.) **contradicting and blaspheming**, the second participle intensifying the first. (46.) **it was necessary**, "the plan of God required it." See Luke 24 : 47. The apostles in this respect obeyed the Saviour's command literally (Acts 2-8); **judge yourself unworthy of eternal life**, "a man's actions may be taken as his own self-pronounced verdict as to his character and deserts."—*Hackett* ; **lo ! we turn to the Gentiles**. See ch. 18 : 6 ; 28 : 28 ; Rom. 11 : 11. (47.) **so hath the Lord commanded**. Is. 49 : 6. That which had been obscurely foretold in the Old Testament, that those should "seek after God who knew him not," and that he should be honored by "those who were not a people," that which had seen its first instalments in a Centurion and a Syrophœnician woman, in Cornelius and Sergius Paulus,—began now to be realized in a whole community. The counsels of God were not frustrated by the unbelief of his chosen people. A new "Israel," a new "election," succeeded to the former. In this way Paul turned repeatedly from the Jews to the Gentiles, as at Corinth (ch. 18 : 6), at Ephesus (ch. 19 : 9), and at Rome

(ch. 28 : 28).—*Howson*. (48.) **as many as were ordained**, or “appointed” unto eternal life, *believed*. To render this “disposed” instead of “appointed” or “ordained,” as Alford does, is not allowable by the philology of the passage. So Calvin, Olshausen, De Wette, Winer, Meyer, Hackett. The doctrine of election is in it without doubt. In what sense men are ordained unto eternal life must be gathered from passages like these: Rom. 8 : 28, etc.; 9 : 11; Eph. 1 : 4, 11; 2 Thess. 2 : 13; 2 Tim. 1 : 9; 1 Pet. 1 : 2. “All explanations” of these words of the historian “opposed” to the doctrine of election “are forced and unsatisfactory.” (50.) **stirred up the devout and honorable women**—i. e., of the Gentiles who had embraced Judaism, quick to be excited against any new doctrine opposed to their adopted faith; **out of their coasts**, or borders. (51.) **shook off the dust** (see Matt. 10 : 14; Luke 10 : 10, 11); **come unto Iconium**, ninety miles east of Antioch, the modern *Konieh*. (52.) **filled with joy**, notwithstanding the persecution. See Matt. 5 : 10-12.

QUESTIONS.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 42. What was the effect of Paul's first discourse in Pisidia? What was he asked to do? Was it the “Gentiles” alone who asked him?
- V. 43. What is meant by “the grace of God”? What by continuing in it?
- V. 44. What kind of an audience did the missionaries, the next Sabbath, have? What *motive* brought the people together? Who came besides Jews and proselytes?
- V. 45. Why was this great multitude more than the Jews could bear? What could they not admit? What evil passion had not been destroyed by their dispersion? (P. S. *On these last questions, see Preparatory Note.*) How did these exclusive Jews express their feelings?
- V. 46. Instead of frightening Paul and Barnabas, what did this persecution lead them to do the more? What was Paul's judgment of this Jewish conduct? Why was it necessary to offer the gospel first to the Jew? Was it so offered? By whom in Jerusalem? To whom does Paul now turn?
- V. 47. What first Gentile instalment of the faith have we in the Gospels? What one before this have we in the Acts? Are the counsels of God ever frustrated by the unbelief of man?
- V. 48. What is meant by “as many as were ordained”? Mysterious as the doctrine of election is, is it not plainly taught in the word of God? Rom. 9 : 20, 21, etc. Will

any one be lost who tries earnestly to be saved? Matt. 11:12. What is eternal life?

V. 49. What was the success of the gospel near Pisidia?

V. 50. What were Jews now impelled to do? What was the result of their measures?

V. 51. Who had commanded this shaking off the dust of the feet? What did the act express? To what city do the apostles now go? Will you name the places visited so far on this first missionary tour?

V. 52. In what state of mind did the missionaries leave the Pisidian Christians? What words of Christ were now fulfilled? Matt. 5:10-12.

Comment.—"I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles:" so is Christ predicted. On this, for further passages, see Isa. 42:1; 54:3; 60:3, 5, 16; 61:6, 9; 62:2; 66:12; Rom. 15:9-12.

"Now daily through Christ's open gate
We see the Gentile spirit press."—*Keble*.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."—MATT. 12:21.

July 22.]

LESSON IV.

PAUL AT LYSTRA.—Acts 14:8-20. A. D. 46.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 13-17.

8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19 ¶ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Historical Connection.—Having been expelled from Antioch in Pisidia, the apostles proceeded to Iconium, a large city, ninety miles south-east of Antioch. Iconium, or the modern *Konie*, had a great part in the growth of the Turkish or Ottoman empire. Similar events happened here to the apostles to those that occurred in Antioch. They preached in the synagogue. Great numbers, both of Jews and Greeks—*i. e.*, proselytes or heathen—believed the gospel. The unbelieving Jews raised an indirect persecution, by means now of the Gentile population, against those who received Christian doctrine. The apostles were loaded with insult, and were in danger of being stoned. Because of which official persecution, they withdrew still farther south-east to the small towns of Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. These towns spoke a rude dialect, and were influenced in belief by primitive superstitions, such as might be looked for among a rough and unsophisticated people. This people, in common with many ancients, held that the gods occasionally visited the earth in the form of men. What wonder was it that the Lystrians should believe that their Jupiter, whose temple was before their city gate, would willingly visit his favorite people? Besides, the expeditions of Jupiter were usually represented as attended by Mercury. He was the companion, the servant, the messenger, of the gods. Ovid, the Roman poet, speaks of a beautiful tradition of Jupiter and Mercury visiting in human form these very regions of Asia Minor. So does the Bible, in its incidental descriptions of the heathen world, furnish “undesigned coincidences” with the facts ascertained from heathen memorials. When, therefore, a cripple in Lystra was healed so suddenly and so completely as to confound the most skilful and skeptical physicians, the illiterate people readily thought that supernatural powers were now indeed among them. Their feelings found expression in their mother-tongue, in the language of childhood: they said, “*The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*” They took Barnabas to be Jupiter, and Paul to be Mercury, Barnabas being “majestically benignant” in his appearance, and Paul “in personal aspect comparatively insignificant.” How truthful and vivid is the scene brought before us!—*Howson, Anno. Lib.*

ANALYSIS.

- I. The apostles work a miracle, vs. 8-10.
- II. They are supposed to be gods, vs. 11, 12.
- III. Are about to be worshipped, v. 13.
- IV. These heathenish ideas corrected, vs. 14-18.
- V. Persecution renewed, vs. 19, 20.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 14 : 1-20.
Tues. v. 9 ; Matt. 9 : 18-30.
Wed. v. 12 ; Ex. 20 : 1-26.
Thurs. v. 14 ; Matt. 26 : 57-68.
Fri. v. 15 ; Jer. 10 : 1-16.
Sat. v. 16 ; Gen. 1 : 1-31.
Sun. v. 19 ; 2 Cor. 11 : 16-30.

EXPLANATIONS.—(8.) **Being a cripple**, whose cure though undesigned is to be the exact counterpart of the first miracle wrought by Peter at the Beautiful Gate. (9.) **heard Paul speak**, probably in the open air, there being no record of a synagogue in Lystra; **steadfastly beholding him**, as Paul looked, when about to work a miracle of punishment upon Elymas. I do not see evidence, as some do here, of Paul's sore eyes; **faith to be healed**, a faith possibly begotten of the report concerning these new teachers that had come from Iconium, where many miracles were wrought (see v. 3), or by the miraculous works which Paul had claimed attested the gospel. (10.) Compare ch. 3 : 6, 7. (11.) **in the speech of Lycaonia**—*i. e.*, the native dialect of the province. In general intercourse, however, the people doubtless used Greek. (12.) **called Barnabas, Jupiter**, the supreme deity of heathen mythology. Barnabas' personal appearance may have been imposing; **and Paul, Mercurius**—*i. e.*, Mercury, the divinity who presided over eloquence, and who was employed in bearing messages from Jupiter to men. (13.) **Then the priest**—*i. e.*, of the temple of Jupiter erected in the neighborhood of the city; **oxen and garlands**, to adorn the oxen; **would have done sacrifice**—*i. e.*, was about to sacrifice in honor of the apostles. It is this scene that Raphael has sketched in one of his exquisite cartoons. (14.) **rent their clothes**, a token of abhorrence. See Matt. 26 : 65; Gen. 37 : 29, 34; 44 : 13; Josh. 7 : 6. (15.) **of like passions**—*i. e.*, infirmities and sufferings, the sense being, "We are frail, mortal men, like yourselves;" **turn from these vanities**, useless superstitions, vain idols,

nonentities; **unto the living God**, "the most glorious and distinctive of all the names of God;" the exact phraseology of the Old Testament, not to be found in the literature of heathenism. Unlike the nonentities of idolatry, the living God possesses underived and endless life (see Jer. 10 : 10, 14, 15); **which made heaven**, etc., this idea of *creation* was utterly unknown alike to rude and to cultivated heathenism. Comp. Gen. 1 : 1; Ps. 96 : 5. (16.) **who in times past suffered**—*i. e.*, left them to do as they liked. Having abandoned God, God abandoned the heathen to themselves (Rom. 1 : 23); did not give to them the revelation of his grace as his chosen people. (17.) **nevertheless**—*i. e.*, men were still under obligations of obedience and gratitude to God for his ever-merciful providence and care. See further on this point, Rom. 2 : 4, 5, 12-15. It is the foundation of the argument by which we prove the accountability of the heathen, as in Rom. 1 : 19. The first two chapters of Romans may well be studied in connection with this lesson. Notice, however, the simplicity and sincerity of the apostles! They sought not, they even rejected honor from men, that God might in all things have the glory. Notice in the next verse (19) the fickleness of men, one day willing to worship the apostles as gods, the next day determined upon their death. "Popularity is a fleeting shadow." (20.) **to Derbe**, the eastern limit of this missionary tour.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—Why did the apostles leave Antioch? Which of the two Antiochs was this? To what city did they proceed? In what direction from Antioch was Iconium? At what distance? Where in Iconium did they preach? What was the result of their missionary labors here? Whose hostility to the Christian doctrine did the Jews arouse in Iconium? To what places do the apostles now go? In what direction were these cities? Of what province? What was the character of the people? By what were they influenced in belief? What divinities did they worship? What tradition confirms the Scripture narrative in our lesson?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 8. "*Cripple*" is from the old English *creep*le, to creep; how great was this cripple's infirmity? Of what other man does this one remind us? Acts 3 : 2.
- V. 9. How had this man obtained "faith to be healed"? What is meant by this faith? Comp. Matt. 9 : 21, 22, 28, 29; Luke 7 : 50; 17 : 19; 18 : 42.

- V. 10. What is the difference between this miracle in Lystra and the one in Paphos?
- V. 11. What is meant by the speech of Lycaonia? In what language did the people have intercourse with foreigners? What other shout was the shout of the people now like? ch. 12 : 21, 22. Was not such a miracle calculated to excite the superstition of unsophisticated people? How did the Lystrians explain it?
- V. 12. What did they call Barnabas? Who was Jupiter? What did they call Paul? Who was Mercurius? What was there in Paul and Barnabas to suggest these distinctions to the people?
- V. 13. What did the priest of the temple of Jupiter now propose to do? How far did he go in paying worship to the apostles?
- V. 14. When the apostles discovered what the people were about, what did they do? Do men nowadays as promptly as these apostles reject public homage? Who only is to be worshipped in this world?
- V. 15. On what level of humanity do the apostles now place themselves? What do they call the heathen gods? How do they describe the true God?
- V. 16. Why had God left the heathen so long to themselves? What is meant by "suffered"? See Acts 17 : 30.
- V. 17. How has God left himself not without witness even in the heathen world? What internal moral witness of God is in every man? Rom. 1 : 20; 2 : 15. Our ancestors in Great Britain once worshipped idols; why are we better taught to-day than they?
- V. 19. How is the scene now changed? In what letter does Paul probably refer to this stoning in Lystra? 2 Cor. 11 : 25. In what condition was Paul left?
- V. 20. What young disciple may have been in this group? ch. 16 : 1; 2 Tim. 3 : 21. Whither do Paul and Barnabas now go? What limit have we now reached? Name the places the apostles passed since beginning their first missionary tour. Through what places do they now retrace their steps? Ans. *Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Perga, Attalia, from which port they embark for Antioch in Syria.*

A Contrast.—Captain Cook allowed himself to be taken for *Oro*, the god of war, by the Sandwich Islanders, and to be worshipped with idolatrous ceremonies. But Paul was actuated by no such human policy for the sake of gaining influence. He would accept no honors that belonged to God alone.

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."—Ex. 20 : 3.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king."—JER. 10: 10.



July 29.]

LESSON V.

THE YOKE BROKEN.—Acts 15: 22-31. A. D. 50.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 25-31.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

A Troublesome Question Settled.—The question how to form a united church on earth, composed of Gentile and Jewish Christians, without enforcing or abrogating the whole Mosaic law,

was one of the greatest questions the apostolic church had to answer. Its solution seemed impossible; and but for the intervention of divine grace, giving wisdom, discretion, forbearance, and firmness to the apostles, it would have been impossible. The Jew had a covenant of circumcision that sanctioned and enforced national isolation. How could he entertain the idea of a cordial social and religious union with the uncircumcised? A feeling of discontent became more and more evident as new Gentile converts were admitted into the church. The return of Paul and Barnabas from their first missionary journey with reports of the door of faith opened to the Gentiles was the signal for a storm of indignation among the Jewish Christians. They looked upon the whole thing as an organized movement to absorb and destroy Judaism. It was a time for battle; and the battle came. Paul and Barnabas are at Antioch, when, lo! some Judaizers, or false brethren, as Paul calls them, are threatening the liberty of Gentile Christians, requiring them to submit to Mosaic ordinances in order to enjoy the blessings of the gospel. After much controversy at Antioch Paul and Barnabas are sent to obtain the decision of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The council there is convened. Peter rehearses his primary work as an apostle in giving the gospel to the Gentiles himself, by his own mouth, and claims that the question was settled by divine authority. Then Paul and Barnabas rehearse their work. Finally, James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19), the president of the council, addresses it, and shows the agreement of Peter's views with ancient prophecy. Amos 9:11, 12. "His argument is this: when God predicted that the Gentiles should bear his name, he made no mention of their circumcision, and this agrees with the facts reported to us."—*Anno. Bibl.* James now proposes that no further burden should be laid upon the Gentiles, "except these, which must of necessity be borne—that they abstain from *meats offered to idols*, and from *blood*, and from things *strangled*, and from *fornication*." The matter of idols and fornication explained itself; abstinence from things *strangled* and from *blood* was a concession to the Jews, who wished in all things possible to observe the law. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:13, 14. To this the whole church at Jerusalem agreed. "The wall of partition was broken down." "The yoke of bondage," which false teachers would have reimposed on the neck of believers, was broken for ever, and over all there fell "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." Once for all it was, in substance, asserted that in the Christian church there is "neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but that Christ is all and in all." Col. 3:11. It was a victory for truth that will yet destroy all national and class distinctions, and form a union of all mankind in the one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God speed the day!

ANALYSIS.

DAILY READINGS.

- I. A delegation sent to Antioch, v. 22.
 II. With "letters," v. 23.
 III. Contents of letters, vs. 23-29.
 IV. Rejoicing in Antioch, vs. 30, 31.

- Mon.* Acts 15:1-31.
Tues. Acts 10.
Wed. Acts 11.
Thurs. Gal. 2.
Fri. v. 27; Lev. 17:10-16.
Sat. v. 29; Rom. 14.
Sun. 1 Cor. 13.

EXPLANATIONS.—(22.) **chosen men**, thereby precluding all suspicion of a partial statement; **Barsabas**, unknown; **Silas**, subsequently a companion of Paul in his second missionary journey. v. 40; ch. 18 : 5; 2 Cor. 1 : 19. In this Epistle he is called *Silvanus*; **chief men**, showing that the church in Jerusalem held the church in Antioch in great honor. (23.) **letters**, rather a letter, or documentary statement of the decision of the council, containing a condemnation of the troublers of the church and a confirmation of the full authority of Paul and Barnabas. (25.) **being assembled with one accord**—*i. e.*, having one mind. (26.) **that have hazarded their lives**, showing a true appreciation of Paul and Barnabas. James does not hesitate “upon giving a compliment,” nor should we, where it is deserved. (27.) **to tell you the same things**, in confirmation. Besides, these two men could say what Paul and Barnabas would shrink from saying. This was a delicate courtesy to the church in Antioch, as also to Paul and Barnabas. Courtesy is always considerate. (28.) **it seemed good to the Holy Ghost**—*i. e.*, to lead us to a decision; **and to us**—*i. e.*, to abide by it; **than these necessary things**, teaching all concerned to avoid giving offence by self-indulgence in things in themselves indifferent (see Rom. 14 : 15)—a principle that applies as well to dancing, theatre-going, card-playing, and wine-drinking, every one of which a Christian will willingly forego, so as not to offend the cause of Christ. If the Gentile Christians “were to be bound by a law of charity to avoid a course which, while it involved no question of conscience on their part, would offend and grieve their Jewish brethren and lead to strife and alienation,” Christians of to-day may cease talking about the *right* or *wrong* of many things in themselves which, by an offence of the purity and peace of the church, bring upon it sorrow and shame. The consciences of men, so far as this, should be regarded. The law of love requires it. (31.) **they rejoiced for the consolation**, furnished by the letter. They approve of what was done. They rejoice at the prospect of an end of the troublesome controversy.

QUESTIONS.

On the Question in Dispute.—What was the great question the apostolic church was called to answer at this period of its progress? Why had the results of Paul's first missionary tour aggravated the controversy? How did the Jews look

upon their ceremonial law? What did they think the universal spread of the gospel would do with Judaism? How did the Judaizing party of Judah try to check the spread of the gospel in Antioch? To what council did the church in Antioch submit itself for a settlement of the difficulty? Who spoke first in the council at Jerusalem? Who followed Peter? What did they rehearse? Who followed these apostles? What harmony does James show between God's word and God's providences in that age? In view of these ancient prophecies, to what conclusion does he come? See v. 19. While the Gentiles were not to be troubled with Jewish burdens, against what heathenish practices were they to guard? v. 20. What, then, had each party to give up?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 22. What three classes composed this assembly? Do we see any prelacy in it? What do they decide to do? Why are two men besides Paul and Barnabas sent? Do we hear of either one of these two messengers again? Acts 16:25.
- V. 23. What was the object of the council in sending letters to Antioch?
- V. 24. What responsibility does the church in Jerusalem disclaim?
- V. 28. By what divine aid was a decision of the question at issue reached? What lesson should this teach churches when in trial? What was the decision reached? What prohibitions were enjoined upon the Gentile Christians? Was not this conceding to the Jews? What greater concessions were expected from the Jews? Should we not all avoid giving offence to God's people by self-indulgence in things indifferent? To what may this be applied in this age? Have we Scripture for this? Rom. 14:15.
- Vs. 30, 31. When this decision reached Antioch, how did it affect the church? Is there not occasion for rejoicing when peace succeeds to discord?

Note.—Let the whole school read together, in closing, Ps. 133.

GOLDEN TEXT.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—GAL. 5:1.

Aug. 5.]

LESSON VI.

PAUL SENT TO MACEDONIA.—Acts 16 : 1-15. A. D. 52 or 58.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 9-14.

1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra : and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed ; but his father *was* a Greek :

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters : for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia : but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night : There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis :

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony : and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made : and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us* : whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

Historical Connection.—We left Paul, Barnabas, Barsabas, and Silas at Antioch. Since then Barsabas has returned to Jerusalem, but Silas abides in Antioch. It was while continuing in Antioch that we may place the visit of Peter to this city, which Paul

refers to in Gal. 2:11, when he accused him of inconsistency. The time had now come for Paul's *second missionary journey*, accompanied now, however, not by Barnabas, but by Silas only. Barnabas wished to take with him his cousin John, whose surname was Mark. "*But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other.*" This separation was sad. It showed that even apostles were human, and not to be exempted from blame. Whose opinion was preferable it is hard to say. It is the last mention we have of Barnabas in the book of Acts. Possibly, the final separation was amicable in the division of the first mission-stations among them, Paul taking the *continental* and Barnabas the *insular* regions. ch. 15:37-41. Now, as Paul and Silas came up from Syria and Cilicia by the long pass through the range of Mount Taurus, called the "*Cilician Gates*," they would reach Derbe before Lystra. ch. 15:41; 16:1. From these cities our lesson traces the course of the apostles to their arrival at Philippi, the first city in Southern Europe to be honored by Christian missionary labor. (The Map needs to be consulted continually in studying and teaching this lesson.)

ANALYSIS.

- I. Timothy at Lystra, vs. 1-3.
- II. Former cities revisited, vs. 4, 5.
- III. Journey extended to Troas, vs. 6-8.
- IV. Paul's vision here, vs. 9, 10.
- V. Arrival at Philippi, vs. 11, 12.
- VI. Baptism of Lydia, vs. 13-15.

READINGS:

<i>Mon.</i>	Acts 15: 32-41: 16: 1-15.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 3; Gal. 2:1-21.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 6; Rev. 1.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 6; Rev. 2.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 6; Rev. 3.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 15; Acts 2:37-47.
<i>SUN.</i>	Rom. 12.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **came to Derbe**, on his north-west course; and **Lystra**, north-west of Derbe; **was there**, Lystra was doubtless Timothy's birthplace. On his parentage, see 2 Tim. 1:5. **his father was a Greek**, a heathen in full, certainly not a proselyte, or his child would have been circumcised. (2.) **well reported of**, everything shows that Timothy was a most engaging young man. Paul formed a lasting attachment to him. See Phil. 2:22. (3.) **took and circumcised him**, being partly of Jewish extraction, his circumcision would be a reasonable concession to Jewish feelings. The case of Titus, the Gentile, was quite different. Gal. 2:3. "*No innocent prejudice was ever treated roughly by Paul.*" To the Jew he became a Jew; to the Gentile, a Gentile; "he was all things or all men, even if by any means he might save some." (4.) **through the cities**, before visited, Iconium, Antioch, Perga. (6.) **throughout Phrygia**, the great central region of Asia Minor; **Galatia**, a large region in

Central Asia Minor, lying east of Phrygia. It derived its name from the Gauls, and became a Roman province B. C. 26. Here Paul planted churches, in part of Jewish and Gentile converts, which were afterward influenced by Judaizers, corrupting their faith; hence the Epistle to the Galatians, which Luther called his "*Catharine von Bora.*" **forbidden by the Holy Ghost**, the divine guide of all missionary work. (7.) **to Mysia**, a district in the north-west corner of Asia Minor; **into Bithynia**, the region just under the Euxine, or Black Sea. (8.) **came down to Troas**, properly *Alexandria Troas*, about four miles from ancient Troy, and not far from Mount Ida. It was the transit-harbor between the North-west of Asia Minor and Macedonia. (9.) **a man of Macedonia**, revealed to be such; **Come over . . . and help us**, "a voice which ever since has been calling on the church to send the gospel to the heathen." (10.) **we**—*i. e.*, Luke with the rest, he having joined the party probably at Troas. (11.) **to Samothracia**, an island in the northern part of the Ægean Sea; **to Neapolis**, a seaport in Thrace, near Philippi; **to Philippi**, a short distance inland, by a stream called *Gangas*. (12.) **the chief city**, rather, a principal city, not the chief. (13.) **by the river side**, there being no synagogue at Philippi, and the Chaldean or Jewish quarter being out of the city; **spake unto the women**, there does not appear to be a single man addressed. (14.) **a seller of purple**, a great article of commerce; **of the city of Thyatira**, between Sardis and Pergamos, in Asia Minor; **worshipped God**, as a Gentile proselyte to the Jewish faith; **heart the Lord opened**, "the first disposition to turn to the Lord is a work of grace."—*Olshausen*. (15.) **she was baptized, and her household**, "*There is nothing to show here that any but adults were baptized.*"—*Hackett, De Wette*.

"Whether this household included children is not explicitly stated. The presumption is that it did." So says the *Portable Commentary*, in the interest of infant sprinkling. Alford also uses these words here: "The apostles, as Jews, would have proposed to administer baptism to the children, and Jewish or proselyte converts would, as matter of course, have acceded to the proposal; and that the practice thus by universal consent tacitly pervaded the universal church can hardly with any reason be doubted. *The preposterous views of the modern Baptists would have been received with astonishment and reprobation in the apostolic church*!"!!! Coleridge, however, in "Aids to Reflection," concedes that too many Pædo-baptists have erred with respect to the household baptisms of the New Testament. "I start back," he says, "from these inverted pyramids where the apex is the base. If I should inform any one that I had called at a friend's house, but found

no one at home, the family having all gone to the play, and if he on the strength of this information should begin at once to asperse my friend's wife for unmotherly conduct in taking an infant six months old to a crowded theatre, would you allow him to press on the words 'nobody,' and 'all the family,' in justification of the slander?" Exactly so with regard to the words "*she and her household.*" Baptists, therefore, must continue to be "*preposterous*" in their views, while at the same time they modestly challenge the glass of six hundred million magnifying power to show to the world the existence of infant sprinkling in the Bible.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—What apostles in our last lesson did we leave at Antioch in Syria? Who returned to Jerusalem? Who remained in Antioch? A difficulty now arises between Paul and Barnabas; what was the occasion of it? How was it settled? Paul now begins his *second* missionary journey; in what direction does he travel from Antioch? What city by this course does he reach first?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Where was Derbe? Had Paul been here before? ch. 14:6. What was the direction of Lystra from Derbe? Whom did Paul find in Lystra? Who was Timothy's mother? For what was she remarkable? 2 Tim. 1:5. Of what nation was Timothy's father?
- V. 2. What is meant in this description by "well reported of"? How well had Timothy been educated? Children had no Sunday-schools then; how were they taught religiously?
- V. 3. On what principle did Paul circumcise Timothy? 1 Cor. 9:20. If Timothy had been a Gentile by both parents, do you think Paul would have circumcised him? Gal. 2:3-5. Why is it not best to treat any harmless prejudice roughly?
- V. 4. Through what cities do they now pass? Why was it well to publish in them the decrees of the council at Jerusalem? In what sense were the decrees binding?
- V. 5. In what region was Phrygia? In what Galatia? How were the churches in Galatia afterward troubled? How did Luther value the Epistle to the Galatians? What were the apostles forbidden now to do? Was the gospel ever preached in the region where the apostles are now prohibited from staying? See Rev. 1, 2, 3.
- V. 7. Where was Mysia? Where Bithynia? What is meant by "assayed to go thither"?
- V. 8. To what place do they come? Where was Troas? How near was ancient Troy? What great scene was enacted near by? Ans. *Homer's Iliad.*
- V. 9. What vision did Paul have in Troas? What is a vision? ch. 10:3. What is there in Homer's *Iliad* as grand as the world's evangelization proposed in this Macedonian call? Has heathendom ever ceased its cry,

"Come over and help us"? On what is the call based? Matt. 28 : 19.

- V. 10. To what conclusion does Paul now come? Luke, in writing up this point, has said "*they*," now he says "*we*;" what is to be inferred from this?
- V. 11. Where is Samothracia? Where Neapolis?
- V. 12. What city is now reached? Is this city on the sea-coast?
- V. 13. In the absence of a synagogue in Philippi, where do the apostles go to worship? To whom do they speak?
- V. 14. What listener is specially mentioned? What was her business? Of what city was she? Did she seek God's grace first, or God's grace first seek her?
- V. 15. How was she baptized? How many modes of baptism are there in the New Testament? What is your idea of Lydia's "household baptism"? Does baptism precede faith? Do infants ever exercise faith? Ought such to be baptized? What grace does Lydia now exercise? Rom. 12 : 13. Restate the places visited by the apostles on this second missionary journey.

A Word from Chrysostom.—Speaking of the baptism of Lydia and her household, Chrysostom says, "*See how she persuaded them all!*" taking it for granted that all were of an age capable of instruction and persuasion.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord."—2 Cor. 2 : 12.

Aug. 12.]

LESSON VII.

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON.—Acts 16 : 22-34. A. D. 52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 28-34.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes : and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Demoniacal Possession.—Thus far the apostles were undisturbed in Philippi. But the scene soon changed. As if to show that Christianity is advanced more by adversity than prosperity, the apostles were suddenly called away from the quiet place of prayer and exhortation by the river-side, silenced, and imprisoned. The occasion was the conflict, now actually begun, between Christianity and Paganism. The sorcerer in Paphos was a Jew ; they were Jews who turned the idolaters of Lystra against the apostles. But the farther Christianity travels westward, the closer does it come into contact with pagan supremacy over the minds of men. The question of demoniacs is, as Howson says (vol. i., p. 298), a most difficult one. "We are content," he adds, "to express our belief that in the demoniacs of the New Testament allusion is really made to personal spirits who exercised power for evil purposes on the human will. The unregenerate world is represented to us in Scripture as a realm of darkness, in which the invisible agents of wickedness hold sway." The degrees and modes of their presence vary. In the times of Jesus their workings were manifest. They recognized him as "the Holy One of God." So after his day they recognized his apostles to be the "servants of the Most High God, who preach the way of salvation." At Philippi, Paul came in contact with "a certain damsel possessed of the spirit of divination"—i. e., prophecy. The prophecies of such persons were usually made known by an internal muttering of ventriloquism. Augustine calls this damsel "*a female ventriloquist*." She was the property of several owners. Her divination was to them a source of great gain, as there were many ignorant people who trusted her word. When she began to advocate the cause of the apostles, however, they were unwilling to have Christ's holy cause rest on such evidence. Paul could bear this satanic interruption no longer. He pitied the poor creature. In the name of Jesus he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. And it de-

parted; her natural powers resumed their course; and the gains of her masters were gone. Of course they were enraged. They brought the apostles at once into the market-place, or *forum*, for trial. They made accusations partly true and partly false. They were false respecting the disturbance of the city created by the apostles; they were true respecting the religious innovations which the Roman empire desired to check. The apostles were without doubt innovators, and were in some degree exposed to legal penalties. They had begun a war with paganism that would ultimately "bring down the whole weight of the Roman law on the martyrs of Christianity." But to our lesson, showing how soon wounded self-interest becomes general discontent; and discontent, fanatical hatred and cruelty; showing also the victory of Christianity, though shut up a while in Philipian jails and Roman catacombs.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. The apostles beaten, v. 22.	<i>Mon.</i> Acts 16: 16-34.
II. The apostles imprisoned, vs. 23, 24.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 18; Luke 8: 26-40.
III. Thanksgiving in prison, v. 25.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 24; Gen. 39.
IV. Earthquake, v. 26.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 25; Rom. 5: 13-21.
V. The jailer alarmed for his soul,	<i>Fri.</i> vs. 30, 31; John 3.
vs. 27-31.	<i>Sat.</i> v. 31; Rom. 3: 21-31.
VI. Converted and baptized, vs. 32-34.	<i>Sun.</i> Rev. 7: 9-17.

EXPLANATIONS.—(22.) **the multitude**—*i. e.*, the populace, not seeing how public interests had been made a cloak for a private quarrel (see vs. 16, 19, 20, 21); **the magistrates**, the "*duum viri*," or "*prætors*," who governed Roman colonies; **to beat them**, having no time to hesitate, in order to retain their popularity the magistrates proceed, without the forms of law, to punish. "Beating with rods," on the naked back. (23.) **many stripes**, see 2 Cor. 11: 23, 24. (24.) **the inner prison**, "the prisons in those days were generally dark, damp, and pestilential, and the inner cells were the worst."—*Anno. Bible*. **in the stocks**, Joseph's feet had been hurt in the stocks (Gen. 39: 21; Ps. 105: 18), and he became a prince of Egypt. Daniel had been cast into a lions' den, afterward to be a ruler of Babylon. (25.) **prayed and sang praises**, literally, "praying, praised God;" their thanksgiving was predominant; **the prisoners heard them**, rather, "listened to them."—*Bible Union Version*. An expressive phrase; having some knowledge of the apostles' sufferings, they wondered at hearing from them sounds of joy. He "*giveth songs in the night*." (26.) **every one's bands were loosed**, showing that the whole event was miraculous. (27.)

would have killed himself, preferring death to disgrace, as he was answerable for his prisoners with his life. (29.) **called for a light**, literally, "lights;" **came trembling, and fell down**, rather, "trembling, fell down." (30.) **brought them out**—*i. e.*, of their inner prison, or cell; **Sirs, what must I do to be saved**, the jailer could not have sought temporal salvation in that hour, for Paul directed his mind to Christ as the only source of salvation. *If this is Universalism, it is welcome to it.* Besides, the jailer now had no occasion to fear for his bodily safety; all were safe, and he had already been cautioned against suicide. "The jailer may have learned the substance of Christian truth from the outcries of the demoniac, and still more from his zealous prisoners themselves; and now God's interposition on their behalf awakened his sleeping conscience." (31.) **And they said**, just what all gospel preachers have said in all ages; **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom God manifests his combined righteousness and mercy; apart from whom there is no salvation. See and study Rom. 3:21-31. (33.) **was baptized, he and all his**, the "all his" here refers to all "in his house" (v. 33) to whom Paul spake "the word of the Lord." Paul did not, of course, address infants in the one case (v. 32), neither are they referred to in the other. v. 33. "It is sad to see men falter over this verse, not having the fairness to take it as it is."—*Dr. Hockett*, in "Our Class-room Notes." (34.) **with all his house**—*i. e.*, of age capable of belief. The Bible Lesson ends here, but the rest of the narrative should be read showing the prisoners' release. Verse 37 in particular should be noticed, showing Paul's consciousness of personal rights, and the manliness of their self-assertion. "How often," says Cicero, "has this exclamation, '*I am a Roman citizen!*' brought aid and safety, even among barbarians in the remotest parts of the earth!"

QUESTIONS.

On Demoniacal Possession.—How did the apostles in Philippi come into conflict with paganism? What reason have we, from the Bible, to believe that personal demoniacal spirits exercise power for evil on the human will? What girl with an evil spirit did the apostles encounter at Philippi? By whom was she owned? Why was she of value to them? What did she say of the apostles? Was her cry sincere? How did Paul put a stop to it? What was the result of this miracle upon the girl herself? What upon her owners? How were

their charges against the apostles false? How true? **Ans.** *The Romans forbade foreign religions until they were naturalized by the Senate.*

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 22. What did this fanatical populace in Philippi fail to see? Why did the magistrates hasten to punish the apostles? What was their first act of punishment? How were the apostles beaten? Does Paul ever refer to this afterward? 2 Cor. 11 : 24.
- V. 24. What is the next thing done? Why were the apostles thrust into "the inner prison"? Why were their feet put into stocks? What are stocks? *Ans.* *A frame of timber with holes in which the feet, or feet and hands, of criminals are firmly held for punishment.*
- V. 25. How did these persecuted ones pass the night? Whose attention was drawn to them? Why?
- V. 26. What miraculous intervention of God now took place? What were its effects?
- V. 27. Who was roused from sleep by it? In what condition did he observe the prison to be? Why did he meditate suicide at once? Why did the Romans praise self-murder?
- V. 28. How did Paul prevent the jailer's rash deed? Why was Paul anxious to save his life?
- V. 29. After securing lights, or torches, what did the jailer do?
- V. 30. What proof is there that the jailer did not pray simply for temporal salvation? If Universalism is true, need anybody be alarmed for his soul? What is it to be saved?
- V. 31. What is the jailer urged to do? What is meant by faith in Christ? Did the jailer's believing in itself effect the salvation of his house?
- V. 32. Who, besides the jailer, listened to Paul's teaching?
- V. 33. What interchange of spiritual and temporal services do we see in this verse? Who are meant by "he and all his"? Because the jailer was baptized "straightway," is it wise to do so in every case?
- V. 34. The friendship of an Oriental is not guaranteed until he has eaten with you (*Baedeker*); what does this jailer now do? What common faith pervades the jailer's household? When bidden to depart out of jail the next day, what does Paul say? Why was it a manly assertion of personal rights? Is *meekness* inconsistent with *self-respect*?

Opinion of Andrew Fuller.—"There is an importance in the truth as it relates to *philosophy, history, politics*, or any other branch of science, inasmuch as it affects the present happiness of mankind; but what is this compared with that which involves their everlasting salvation? To be furnished with an answer to the question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' is of infinitely greater account than to be able to decide whether the Ptolemaic or Coperni-

can system be that of nature. The temporal salvation of a nation, great as it is, is nothing when compared with the eternal salvation of a single individual."—Vol. iii., p. 527.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."—Ps. 40:3.

Aug. 19.]

LESSON VIII.

THESSALONIANS AND BEREANS.—Acts 17:1-14. A. D. 52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 10-14.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assailed the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also:

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the others, they let them go.

10 ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in

that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

New Mission Stations.—Paul's *second missionary journey* has thus far included *Antioch* in Syria, *Syria*, *Cilicia*, *Derbe*, *Lystra*, *Iconium*, *Antioch* in Pisidia, *Phrygia*, *Galatia*, *Trous*, *Samothracia*, *Neapolis*, and *Philippi*. He now extends it to *Amphipolis*, about thirty-three miles south-west of Philippi, a large commercial city on the river Strymon, and the capital of the first division of Macedonia; thence to *Apollonia*, about thirty miles south-west of Amphipolis; thence to *Thessalonica* (pronounced with long *i*, with accent on the *i*), about thirty-seven miles west of Apollonia, on the great *Ægean* road leading from Rome to the Asiatic provinces. Thessalonica was a great maritime city, and well fitted to be the centre of great gospel light. It was the capital of the second division of Macedonia and the seat of a Roman governor. It shared the commerce of the *Ægean* Sea with Corinth and Ephesus. It was a place of great luxury and wealth, retained its importance all through the Middle Ages, and is now the second city in European Turkey (*Saloniki*). There were many Jews in Thessalonica when visited by Paul. In their synagogue he was at first well received. But the great success of apostolic preaching, especially among Gentile proselytes, aroused Jewish envy, compelling the missionaries to leave the city. After this the new converts were subjected to severe trials and persecutions, 1 Thess. 1: 6; 2: 13. Paul intended twice to visit them (1 Thess. 2: 17, 18), but was prevented by the enmity of the Jews. Acts 17: 13-15. He, however, sent Timothy to inquire after them, learned of their constancy and steadfastness in the gospel, and of their kind remembrance of him. 1 Thess. 3: 6-10. But they needed instruction on several points of doctrine, particularly on that of the second coming of our Lord. In these circumstances Paul wrote to them the two Epistles to the Thessalonians to correct their defects and to build them up in the faith. They are the earliest that we possess of Paul's writings, and were written probably later in the year from Corinth, the third city visited after Thessalonica, the other two cities being Berea, a large town forty-five miles south-west of Thessalonica, and Athens, two hundred and fifty miles south-east of Berea. (The Maps should be consulted fully on all these stages of Paul's missionary journeyings.)

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul and Silas at Thessalonica, vs. 1-4.
- II. Their persecution and departure, vs. 5-9.
- III. Arrival at Berea, vs. 10-12.
- IV. Persecution, v. 13.
- V. Sent away by the brethren, v. 14.

DAILY READINGS.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Mon.</i> | Acts 17: 1-14. |
| <i>Tues.</i> | 1 Thess. 1. |
| <i>Wed.</i> | 1 Thess. 2. |
| <i>Thurs.</i> | 1 Thess. 3. |
| <i>Fri.</i> | v. 7; John 19: 12-22. |
| <i>Sat.</i> | v. 11; John 5: 33-47. |
| <i>Sun.</i> | vs. 13, 14; Matt. 10: 16-42. |

EXPLANATIONS.—(17.) On the situation of the three cities named in this verse, see note on *New Mission Stations*. Particularly see statement respecting Thessalonica, and mark its situation on the Map; **where was a synagogue**, rather, *the* synagogue, the first reached in Europe. (2.) **as his manner was**, always beginning with the Jews (see Acts 13 : 46); **three sabbath days**, which by no means measures the length of his residence in the city; (3.) **opening and alleging**—*i. e.*, setting forth; **is Christ**, rather, “and that this” (predicted sufferer) “is the Christ” (Messiah) “Jesus whom I preach to you.”—*Bible Union*. They are almost the very words of Luke. ch. 24 : 26. (4.) **consorted**, joined themselves to Paul; **of the devout Greeks**, Gentile proselytes. See ch. 16 : 13. Some of these, after embracing the gospel, became its most faithful adherents; **chief women**, female proselytes of distinction. (5.) **lewd fellows of the baser sort**, market-place loafers, street-corner loungers, of indifferent character, ill-disposed, mischievous; **gathered a company**, a mob; **the house of Jason**, a relative of Paul (Rom. 16 : 31), and favorable to his views; **sought to bring them**—*i. e.*, Jason’s guests. (6.) **unto the rulers**, literally, “politarchs.” Luke’s precision is seen in this term, for it is found in an inscription to-day on one of the ruined arches of the city; **these that have turned**, etc., a noble testimony to apostolic activity and success. (7.) **do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar**, the Jews generally hated the Roman empire, but suddenly they are very loyal to the emperor. Pilate heard such a plea of loyalty when the Jews wished to make a case against Jesus (see John 19 : 12-15); **another king**, a false statement of Paul’s preaching respecting the coming and kingdom of our Lord. See 1 Thess. 2 : 12; 2 Thess. 1 : 5; Matt. 27 : 11. (8.) **troubled the city**, through fear that its privileges as a free city would be jeopardized. (9.) **taken security**, or bail, as a money-pledge that the preachers henceforth should keep the peace; **and of the others**—*i. e.*, Jason’s friends. (10.) **immediately sent away Paul and Silas**, Luke having probably departed from Paul at Philippi for professional service elsewhere. Timothy is also not mentioned as having accompanied Saul to Thessalonica; **unto Berea**, forty-five miles to the south-west, on the eastern slope of the Olympian range, and at that time sufficiently populous to

contain many Jews. (11.) **these were more noble**, less narrowed by prejudice than their countrymen in Thessalonica; **searched the Scriptures daily**, truth sought in this spirit and with persistent study cannot long remain undiscovered. (13.) **stirred up the people**—*i. e.*, the multitude. See ch. 14: 19. Jewish bigotry was never long in taking active measures to hunt upon the track of its prey. It had so pursued its cruel chase from Iconium to Lystra; now it does the same from Thessalonica to Berea. (14.) **sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea**—*i. e.*, toward the sea, a distance of twenty miles. Paul probably embarked for Athens at *Dium*; and **Timothy**, having joined Paul's company either at Thessalonica or at Berea; **abode there still**, to build up the church and to support it in trial.

QUESTIONS.

On New Mission Stations.—As a first exercise, will you give the journeyings of Paul thus far on his second missionary tour? What city has he just left? To what city does he then come? In what direction and how far is Amphipolis from Philippi? What is the city he next reaches? How far is this from Amphipolis? After this to what city does he come? How far and in what direction is Thessalonica from Apollonia? Will you describe the fitness of Thessalonica to be a great centre of Christian missions? What can you say of the membership and character of the church founded by Paul at Thessalonica? Of its subsequent history? To whom did Paul write his earliest Epistles?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Is this the first or second synagogue we have reached in Macedonia?
- V. 2. What plan of work is referred to by the phrase "as his manner was"?
- V. 3. What truth, the greatest of all truths, did Paul preach about in Thessalonica? What is meant by "opening" in this verse? Luke 24: 32. What by "alleging"? See Gal. 3: 1. In what sense was there a necessity, "a needs-be," about our Saviour's sufferings? Why are the death and resurrection of Christ almost always spoken of together? See Rom. 4: 25. (*The death of Christ secures the pardon of sins, his resurrection the higher privileges of life eternal to the justified.*) What is the meaning of "Jesus"? Matt. 1: 21. What is the meaning of "Christ"? Ans. *The anointed One*, John 1: 41. Which name is the more human? Which the more divine? When united, what do they include?
- V. 4. Among what class did Paul have many converts? What was the character of Paul's preaching? 1 Thess.

2:2. How did he place his disinterestedness above suspicion? 1 Thess. 2:9.

- V. 5. What course do the unbelieving Jews take to get rid of the apostles?
- V. 6. Not finding them, whom do they bring to the rulers? What is their charge? To what is it a noble testimony?
- V. 7. Was this pretended loyalty of the Jews to Cæsar sincere? Who before them had made a similar pretence to loyalty? John 19:12.
- V. 9. For what reason was this security taken from Jason and the others?
- V. 10. To what city do Paul and Silas now go? In what direction and how far away is Berea from Thessalonica?
- V. 11. Here, too, Paul seeks out a synagogue; how does he find the Jews of Berea compare with the Jews of Thessalonica? For what will the Berean Christians ever be remembered? What has Christ taught us on this point? John 5:39. If all young Christians imitated the Bereans, what would they always be able to do? See 1 Pet. 3:15. If there be no daily devotions in the family, will the children be trained in the way they should go? Prov. 22:6.
- V. 13. What effect had Paul's success in Berea upon the Jews in Thessalonica? Do you suppose they had forgotten that Paul was once a persecutor himself?
- V. 14. To what place does Paul now go? From what town did he probably embark for Athens? The churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea were cradled in a storm of persecution; for what, as Christians, should we be grateful? Ps. 16:6. Will not our accountability to God be according to our means of grace? Luke 12:48.

The Teaching of this Lesson.—The divine counsels are often accomplished by means of the opposition of wicked men, and thus the path of the apostle is urged on in the midst of trial and sorrow, in the direction pointed out at Jerusalem, "*far hence unto the Gentiles.*" Acts 22:21.—*Howson.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—ACTS 17:11.

Aug. 26.]

LESSON IX.

PAUL AT ATHENS.—Acts 17: 22-34. A. D. 52.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 24-31.

22 ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands:

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 ¶ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Athens.—Athens, "the eye of Greece," was the capital of Attica, about four miles from the sea, on the south-west slope of Mount *Lycabettus*. It was adorned with public buildings by Pericles, B. C. 460-429. In the early Christian centuries it was one of the chief seats of learning in the world. The Romans sent their sons to Athens, as to a university, to complete their education. Several places in its topography must be noted. I. THE ACROPOLIS. This was a steep rock in the middle of the city, 150 feet high, 1150 feet long, and 500 feet broad. Its sides had almost perpendicular slopes, excepting at the west end. At this western end, where access was alone practicable, were the magnificent *Propylæa*, the "entrances," built by Pericles. The summit of the Acropolis was covered with the Parthenon and

Erechtheum, and with numerous statues of bronze and marble. Here, standing on a pedestal twenty feet high, was the statue of Minerva, fifty-five feet high, with helmet, spear, and shield, the first object on the Acropolis visible from the sea. II. AREOPAGUS, OR MARS' HILL. This was west of the Acropolis, though not as high, accessible on the south side by a flight of sixteen steps cut out of the rock. They are seen to-day. This hill gave its name to the celebrated council that held its sittings there. It was the most venerable of all the Athenian courts. Here the Areopagites sat as judges in the open air. Before this council Socrates was tried. Here

"The famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece,
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

Paradise Regained.

The Areopagus possesses, therefore, peculiar interest to the Christian as the spot from which Paul delivered his memorable speech to the "men of Athens." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary* has a fine picture of Mars' Hill, showing its stone steps.)

Paul's Speech at Mars' Hill.—This speech has given to Mars' Hill a celebrity "above all Greek, above all Roman, fame." The apostle had been for days among the forums of great men and deified heroes, among the temples, the statues, the altars, the gods, of Greece. The one overpowering result was this: "*His spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city,*" not "wholly given to idolatry," but literally "*full of idols.*" "It was easier," says a Roman satirist, "to find a god in Athens than a man." Athens had more images than all Greece put together. Xenophon, Socrates, Cicero, Livy, Strabo, Lucian, and others bear witness to the statement. Luke's accuracy is therefore noticeable, "*full of idols.*" For some time Paul had mingled with the people in the crowded *Agora*, or marketplace, in the valley south of Mars' Hill, had disputed with Epicureans and Stoics, and so greatly was their curiosity excited that they chose Mars' Hill as a place to hear him publicly, both for its convenience and its associations. To this place of Athenian eloquence Paul ascends. The Acropolis, with its thronging temples, statues, and gods, was before him. In the shadow of the goddess of Athens, whose statue was before him, he declared unto the Athenians the *unknown God*. "Scholars," writes Dr. Hackett, "vie with each other in their commendation of this discourse. The Greek language has nothing like it in beautiful and effective eloquence." (For a graphic description of Paul here, see *Last Days of Pompeii*, chap. 5.)

ANALYSIS.

- I. Conciliatory introduction, v. 22.
- II. Limitation of natural religion, v. 23.
- III. The "unknown God revealed," v. 23.
 - (a) Creator of all things, v. 24.
 - (b) Independent of all things, v. 25.
 - (c) Man's Maker and Benefactor, vs. 26-28.
- IV. Application of these truths, v. 29.
- V. Man's present accountability, vs. 30, 31.
- VI. Effect of Paul's speech, vs. 32-38.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon. Acts 17: 16-34.
 Tues. v. 23; 2 Tim. 2: 15-26.
 Wed. v. 24; 1 Kings 8: 22-30.
 Thurs. v. 26; 2 Cor. 5: 14-21.
 Fri. v. 26; Gen. 2.
 Sat. v. 27; Ps. 139: 1-12.
 Sun. v. 31; John 5: 19-29.

EXPLANATIONS.—(22.) **too superstitious**, this rendering is most unfortunate and unjust. Paul's words are a genuine *compliment*, not a *discourtesy*. He tells the Athenians that he finds them to be "eminently religious," not "too superstitious." Devoutness was a distinction of which the Athenians were proud; and without praising or blaming it, Paul avails himself of the fact to gain attentive ears. It was the language of conciliation and used in a good sense. Prof. Robinson of Brown University was accustomed to put *Paul's* speech, and *Mark Antony's* over Cæsar's dead body, together as illustrative of an orator's winning art. (23.) **your devotions**, your innumerable objects of worship, idols; **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**, rather, "to an unknown God." Such altars are referred to by Pausanias and Philostratus. "The Athenians desired to appease the anger of any god who might be unknown to them."—*Hackett*. Paul's exordium, therefore, as Monod says, is not so much *ingenious* as it is *true*. v. 22 compared with v. 23. (24.) **Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship**, rather, "Whom therefore, not knowing, ye worship, this one I announce to you." You rightly acknowledge that there is a Deity hitherto unknown to you: him I make known. The inverted order adds force to the thought; **God that made the world**, the God whom I announce, Paul says, is Creator of all things, distinct from all false gods. (25.) Paul now shows that God is unlike heathen deities in his independence of his creatures, as needing nothing from them.—*Hackett*. (26.) **worshipped**—*i. e.*, served. Paul here affirms the creation of the race from a common stock. "Nothing, then, can be more absurd than the feeling of superiority with which one race or nation looks down upon another." Paul strikes at the disregard of the Jew by the Greek most plainly. But there is neither Jew nor Greek in Paul's Christianity; **hath determined**, or "fixed the appointed seasons and limits of their abode." "The apostle here opposes both Stoical fate and Epicurean chance." (27.) **seek the Lord**, as the end of life. (28.) **own poets have said**, both by *Aratus* of Cilicia and *Cleanthes* the Stoic. Dr. West translates the latter at length. See Dr. Ripley's *Acts*, p. 240.

"From thee we came, from thee our being drew:
Whatever lives and moves, great Sire! is thine,
Embodied portions of the soul divine."—*Hymn of Cleanthes*.

(29.) **is like unto gold or silver or stone**, and this Paul says in the presence of the most celebrated works of *Phidias*, and of the statue of *Minerva*, and of an assembly that regarded these things as the highest glory of Athens. (30.) **winked at**, overlooked. See ch. 14:16; Rom. 3:25. (31.) **from the dead**. See John 5:19-29. (33.) **will hear thee again**, probably a polite expression of indifference.

QUESTIONS.

On Athens.—Of what was Athens the capital? How far was it from the sea? At the slope of what mountain was it? What steep rock was in the middle of the city? Give its dimensions. Which end was accessible? What was built on this west end? With what was the Acropolis covered? What wonderful statue was here? Was it visible for any distance? Where was Mars' Hill situated? How was its summit made accessible? To what did Areopagus give its name? What distinguished philosopher was tried by this court? How long before Paul's visit was this? Ans. 450 years. What orators spoke on Mars' Hill? What makes this hill of peculiar interest to the Christian? Before making this speech how had Paul been occupied in Athens? At what was his spirit stirred? With whom did he reason? What was an Epicurean? Ans. *One who assumed pleasure to be the highest good.* What was a Stoic? Ans. *One who was indifferent to both pleasure and pain.* Where do these curious Epicureans and Stoics take the apostle? Why to Mars' Hill?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 22. What is the true rendering of "too superstitious"? How does this change the thought? Ought not Christian preachers to have tact and versatility?
- V. 23. How does Paul bring the true God to the attention of the Athenians? As they acknowledged a god they did not know, what did Paul do for them? Was there any affront in all this? Was there any skill as of a master at his work? 2 Tim. 2:15.
- V. 24. What work does Paul attribute to the true God? How does Paul say he differs from idols?
- V. 25. What else does Paul now claim for the true God?
- V. 26. Does this verse teach the necessity of as many religions as there are nations? Why not? Is there not in all mankind a unity of sin? Of moral accountability? Of condemnation? Did Paul think of Christ as a Jew? 2 Cor. 5:16.
- V. 28. What is the sentiment Paul quotes from a Greek poet?
- V. 29. Notwithstanding the great devoutness of the Athenians, to what conclusion does Paul now bring them? Will a man's devotion please God if he does not worship the Father through Jesus Christ? Gold. Text and Jn. 14:6.

- V. 30. In what respect does Paul tell the Athenians that the times have changed?
- V. 31. How does Paul enforce the need of repentance? One clear and well-attested fact proves the truth that Christ will judge the world; what is it?

Comment.—This great speech of Paul was seemingly ineffective. Two persons only believed, v. 34. But the end is not yet. "A thousand years with God are as one day, and one day as a thousand years." Who shall measure the service of this speech, however, in determining the action of the Christian world?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—1 TIM. 2 : 5.

Sept. 2.]

LESSON X.

PAUL AT CORINTH.—Acts 18 : 1-11. A. D. 53, 54.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 7-11.

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth :

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome): and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought : for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean : from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed

on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Corinth.—Corinth, forty-five miles from Athens, was a city on the "Isthmus of Corinth." This isthmus connected the Corinthian Gulf on the west with the Saronic on the east, and in its narrowest part was about five miles across. It separated the Peloponnesus (now *Morea*) on the south from Hellas or the mainland on the north. The territory of Corinth embraced the greater part of the isthmus. The poets called it "the city of two seas." In the north and south of Corinth the country is mountainous, but in the centre it is a plain with a solitary and steep mountain rising from it, the *Acrocorinthus*, 1900 feet in height, which served as the citadel of Corinth. The city itself was on the north side of this mountain, and its walls, including the *Acrocorinthus*, were nearly nine miles in circumference. It had ports on two seas, *Cenchree* and *Lechæum*, and became very early the emporium of the trade between Europe and Asia. It was adorned with magnificent buildings. Julius Cesar recognized the importance of Corinth as a military and mercantile position, and sent thither a colony of Italians; a circumstance which may account for the Latin name of Christians in this city, *Cicins*, *Quartus*, *Fortunatus*, *Crispus*, and *Justus* (ch. 16: 17; 18: 7, 8; Rom. 16: 23). Jews also in great numbers settled here on account of its facilities for commerce. It was at this time the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the residence of the Proconsul Galho. Athens now had the memory only of its pre-eminence, while Corinth held the keys of commerce. Corinth had gained much of its ancient greatness. But with all this were associated a luxury and licentiousness which made its name proverbial even among heathens.

Paul in Corinth.—The reasons for Paul's going to Corinth were doubtless these: (1) his discouragement at Athens. (2) Corinth was a large mercantile city; the gospel once established in Corinth would rapidly spread everywhere. (3) From the advantages the city offered for trade, the Jews established there were numerous. "A religion which was first to be planted in the synagogue, and was thence intended to scatter its seeds over all parts of the earth, could nowhere find a more favorable soil than among the Hebrew families at Corinth."—*Hewson*.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul at Corinth, v. 1.
- II. Manual and spiritual labor, vs. 2-4.
- III. Cheered by friends, v. 5.
- IV. Turning to the Gentiles, vs. 6-8.
- V. Emboldened by a vision, vs. 9, 10.
- VI. Time spent in Corinth, v. 11.

READINGS.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| <i>Mon.</i> | Acts 18: 1-11. |
| <i>Tues.</i> | v. 3; 2 Thess. 3. |
| <i>Wed.</i> | v. 3; 1 Cor. 9. |
| <i>Thurs.</i> | v. 5; 1 Cor. 2. |
| <i>Fri.</i> | v. 6; Ezek. 33. |
| <i>Sat.</i> | v. 10; John 14: 18-31. |
| <i>Sun.</i> | v. 10; Eph. 1. |

EXPLANATIONS.—(2.) **a certain Jew named Aquila** (*Ak'we-lu*), a Roman name (see ch. 13 : 9); **born in Pontus**, the eastern district of Asia Minor, under the Euxine or Black Sea, spoken of three times in the New Testament (Acts 2 : 9, 10; 18 : 2; 1 Pet. 1 : 1). Having no account of Aquila's conversion at Corinth, the probability is that he embraced the gospel at Rome. It is interesting to note, therefore, so far as we follow the New Testament records, *that this Jew of Pontus has a stronger claim to take his place among the founders of the church in Rome than either Peter or Paul.*—*Plumptre*, in Sunday Magazine, 1868, p. 302. For further notices of Aquila, see Rom. 16 : 3, 4; 1 Cor. 16 : 9; 2 Tim. 4 : 19; **Priscilla**, or "Prisca," possibly a Gentile of high rank and of great service as a proselyte to the church; hence Paul's mention of her name prior to that of her husband in apostolic salutations (Rom. 16 : 3; 2 Tim. 4 : 19); **all Jews to depart from Rome**, including Christians, because the distinction between Christian and Jew was not clear. This expulsion, afterward mentioned by Suetonius, occurred about A.D. 52. It may have been ordered to quell the disturbance of the Jews respecting Christianity; **and came unto them**, being of the same craft. Paul had been brought up in Tarsus to work at a trade. The Jews had a saying, "that the man, either of poverty or wealth, who did not teach his son a handicraft taught him to be a thief." Being of the same craft with Aquila, Paul abode with him, and wrought at tent-making—a lucrative employment then, as many Romans throughout the empire passed their lives in the "tented field." The reasons why Paul labored here are given in 1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 11 : 7-12.

(5.) **pressed in spirit**, engrossed with responsibilities and difficulties, in a state of mind needing sympathy and friendship. (6.) **shook his raiment**—*i. e.*, the dust from it (see ch. 13 : 51; Neh. 5 : 13); **your own heads**—*i. e.*, the consequences of your guilt. See Ezek. 33; Matt. 27 : 5. (7.) **departed thence**—*i. e.*, from the synagogue, to hold meetings near by in the house of *Justus*, a Gentile proselyte. See Col. 4 : 11. There was probably no room suitable in Aquila's manufactory. (8.) **And Crispus**, not many wise, not many noble are called in Corinth (comp. 1 Cor. 1 : 26 with 1 Cor. 6 : 10, 11), but to this Crispus was an exception, and he a ruler of the synagogue. (9.) **be not afraid**, Paul had reason to fear personal injury. See v. 10; 2 Thess. 3 : 2; 1 Cor. 2 : 3

(10.) **much people in this city**, divinely elected to be saved. (11.) **a year and six months**, so great had been his success here, and so central was it for apostolic influence, not only in all Achaia, or Southern Greece (2 Cor. 1 : 1), but in all the world.

QUESTIONS.

On Corinth.—How far was Corinth from Athens? On what isthmus was it situated? What gulfs were on the east and west of this isthmus? How far was it on the isthmus across between these gulfs? What districts did this isthmus separate? What is the character of the country north and south of Corinth? On what was the citadel of Corinth built? How many miles was Corinth in circumference? How many ports had it? What line of trade did Corinth command? How did Julius Cæsar show his interest in Corinth? Why was it attractive to so many Jews? Corinth was full of material wealth in architecture and art, but what was its moral character?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. What reasons led Paul to Corinth? See Note on *Paul in Corinth*.
- V. 2. What Jew did he meet here? Where was this Jew born? From what country had he just come? *With whom?* Where had Aquila and Priscilla probably been converted? Why did they leave Rome?
- V. 3. Why did Paul abide in Aquila's family? How had Paul probably been brought up? What was the saying of the Jews about teaching a child a trade? Why is the temptation to immediate wealth in our age destructive to habits of industry? What made tent-making a lucrative employment? After a church had been established in Corinth, what did the apostle teach this church that its duty was in supporting ministers? 1 Cor. 9 : 13, 14.
- V. 4. Where did Paul spend his Sabbaths? How was he then employed?
- V. 5. Who now arrive from Macedonia? Where had Paul sent for them? ch. 17 : 15. Why did their arrival cheer Paul?
- V. 6. How do the Jews in Corinth treat Paul? What action, warranted by Christ, does Paul now indulge in? Mark 6 : 11.
- V. 7. After leaving the synagogue, in what house does Paul hold public worship?
- V. 8. What was the usual character of the converts? Comp. 1 Cor. 1 : 26 with 6 : 10, 11. What one Jew of high standing was an exception to this class? By *whom* was he baptized? 1 Cor. 1 : 14-16. Who was probably the **first** convert in Corinth? Rom. 16 : 5.

- V. 9. Paul's spirit is now much depressed; how does God encourage him?
- V. 10. Does God elect his people now to be saved? John 15 : 16; Eph. 1 : 4. Does this make personal accountability needless? Phil. 2 : 12.
- V. 11. Why is Paul's stay in Corinth protracted so long? What epistles does he without doubt write here? Ans. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Did Paul usually write or dictate his epistles? 2 Thess. 3 : 17; 1 Cor. 16 : 21; Rom. 16 : 22. What verse embodies Paul's history in Corinth? See *Golden Text*.

Review Questions.—What places has Paul so far visited on his second missionary journey? We leave Paul on this journey here; what places does he visit before reaching Antioch again? Ans. *Cenchreae, Ephesus, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Antioch*. Acts 18 : 18-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”—Rom. 12 : 11.

Sept. 9.]

LESSON XI.

PAUL AT EPHESUS.—Acts 19 : 1-12. A. D. 54, 55.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 1-6.

1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus : and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul :

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey.—After a brief notice of another visitation of the churches in the interior of Asia Minor (ch. 18 : 23), the narrative passes on to the place which formed the chief centre of Paul's labors on his third missionary journey, introducing first the preparatory work of Apollos at Ephesus, and his departure thence to Corinth before Paul's arrival. ch. 18 : 24-28. Paul then comes to Ephesus. From Ephesus he revisits and extends the churches in Northern and Southern Greece, returns by way of Macedonia to Treas, thence sails to Miletus, thence by voyage to Ptolemais, thence by land to Cæsarea and Jerusalem. Here his missionary travels end. We now return to Ephesus, where we first meet Paul on his third missionary journey. It covers in all about four years, chiefly, however, in labors in and about Ephesus.

Ephesus.—On the western coast of Asia Minor is a district known in the classics as Ionia. It lay mainly between two rivers, though extending a little beyond them, the *Hermus* on the north, the *Meander* on the south. It was about one hundred miles in length, and less than half that average distance in breadth. Two beautiful islands lying just off from the coast belonged to it, Chios toward the north and Samos toward the south. Besides these two rivers, bounding Ionia, there is a third, the *Cayster*, which flows between them, at whose mouth stood the city of Ephesus. This was Ionia, colonized from the selectest portion of the Greek race a thousand years before Christ. Twelve Greek cities rose along the coast and upon the two islands, confederate for the purpose of government and religion, and for the common life and culture which gave birth to art and literature. Architecture attained here its finishing grace in the Ionic column. Genius sung here its sublimest epic in the *Iliad* of Homer, the blind bard of Chios. Here language, newly modulated, had a breezy lightness and softness in the Ionian lyrics, which became the models of Greece. This little Greek confederacy, not much larger than Massachusetts in territorial limits, became the centre of a widely-extended influence upon Oriental life, religion, and manners. Ephesus was its great metropolis, as afterward, at the time of our New Testament studies, it was the chief city of Proconsular Asia. It stood at the mouth and on the south bank of the *Cayster*. It extended over a wide plain and up the two slopes of Mount Prion, at its right, and of Mount Coressus, at its back. Near the banks of the river, north-east of the city, rose the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world, with its 127 columns, each 60 feet high, and each the gift of a king. In this city were theatres and gymnasia. Partly within and partly just beyond the limits of Ionia were the cities which were to contain the seven churches of Asia, planted

doubtless by Paul—*Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia*, and *Laodicea*—holding the seven golden candlesticks that were to bear aloft the light of Christianity. Not far off is the little island of Patmos, not like the others which gem the waters with green, but rising as a bald and barren rock out of the *Ægean Sea*. This description is possibly enough to give an idea of the vast importance of Ephesus as a stronghold of the pagan religion and as one of the keys of its position, like Corinth, which Christianity would be likely to take and hold. It opened to the *Ægean*, and invited the commerce of the world. Reaching out from it were highways leading to the magnificent Roman road that ran across the highlands of Phrygia and passed over the ridge of the Taurus, even to the river Euphrates. Here Paul came to preach the gospel, first to the Jews, then to Greeks and Orientals. At the end of three years it is said that even the splendid temple of Diana began to be deserted of its worshippers, so directly had Christianity gone to the sorest needs of an age consecrated to lust, and fast sinking down into Asiatic effeminacy and corruption. Thus was it that, under Paul, and, later in the century, under John, Christianity broke away from the synagogue, shivered in pieces the Jewish shell that strove to confine it, and threw itself out on the vast floating wave of Gentile peoples, which it was to renovate and redeem.—Condensed from *Sears' "Heart of Christ."*

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul at Ephesus, v. 1.
- II. Instructs certain disciples, vs. 1-4.
- III. Their rebaptism and added gifts, vs. 5-7.
- IV. Preaching in the synagogue, v. 8.
- V. Afterward in the hall of Tyrannus, vs. 9, 10.
- VI. Special miracles, vs. 11, 12.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 19 : 1-12.
Tues. Eph. 1.
Wed. Eph. 2.
Thurs. Eph. 3.
Fri. Eph. 4.
Sat. Eph. 5.
SUN. Eph. 6.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **Apollos**, for items of his history see ch. 18:24-28; 1 Cor. 3:6; 16:12; **upper coasts**, the highlands of Central Asia Minor; **came to Ephesus**, as he promised he would come (ch. 18:21); **disciples**, with imperfect but sincere faith. (2.) **Have ye received the Holy Ghost since**, it should be, "*Did ye receive the Holy Ghost*"—i. e., his supernatural gifts—"when ye believed?" See ch. 8:17; 10:45; **We have not so much as heard**, should be, "*We did not so much as hear whether there were any Holy Ghost*"—i. e., as specially manifested according to Joel's prophecy. See John 7:39. (3.) **Unto what then**, as the object of faith and confession; **unto John's baptism**, knowing of the Messiah only as John preached him, as a being to

come, and nothing of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. (4.) **Then said Paul**, "The reply of Paul is apparently this, 'John indeed preached repentance and a Saviour to come, as you know; but the Messiah whom he announced has appeared in Jesus, and you are now to believe in him as John directed.'"—*Hackett*. (5.) **they were baptized in the name**, rather *into* the name of Jesus Christ; not that all of John's disciples needed rebaptism in order to enter the Christian church. There was a special reason for rebaptism in this case which may not have applied to Apollos or any other disciples of John. ch. 18:26. This reason was without doubt the unintelligent and irregular manner of their early religious education. The whole passage, however, is confessedly difficult. (6.) **laid his hands on them** (see ch. 8:17); **and prophesied**, see ch. 13:1; 15:32. (8.) **the kingdom of God**—*i. e.*, the religion of Jesus. (9.) **in the school of one Tyrannus**, Tyrannus was possibly a Jewish rabbi or a Greek sophist favorable to Paul; his school was doubtless a hall used for public discussion. (10.) **two years**—*i. e.*, after he left the synagogue; he was three years in all in Ephesus. (11.) **special miracles**. See ch. 4:15. These were a signal refutation of the charms, amulets, and mystic letters of the magicians of Ephesus. (12.) **evil spirits**, plainly distinguished from diseases.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul's Third Missionary Journey.—What churches does Paul visit first on his third missionary journey? What place forms the chief centre of his operations on this journey? How many years does this journey cover? How long is it to this point since Paul's conversion? Since the death of Christ?

On Ephesus.—Where was Ephesus? In what district was it situated in the classics? Between what rivers did Ionia lay? State its territorial dimensions. What islands lay off its coast? What third river flows through the centre of Ionia? What city was built at its mouth? By whom was Ionia colonized? Of what was Ephesus the chief city in the time of our New Testament studies? What one of the seven wonders of the world was in Ephesus? Of what was this city a stronghold? What made it, like Corinth, a desirable centre for Christianity? Why was Christianity particularly adapted to the social life of that age? What apostle, long after Paul, labored with the churches of Asia Minor? Why did God remove their candlesticks? Rev. 2:4, 5.

On Bible Lesson.—

V. 1. Who was Apollos, and for what was he distinguished?

ch. 18:23. To what was his knowledge at first limited? ch. 18:25. Who taught him more perfectly? v. 26. Why was he anxious to go to Achaia? v. 27. What was his success there? v. 28; 1 Cor. 3:5-7. Had Paul promised to return to Ephesus? Whom did he find there?

- V. 2. What did Paul mean by the question he asked these disciples? What was the meaning of their reply?
- V. 3. What other question did Paul now ask them? What answer did they make? Of whom does this show them to be ignorant?
- V. 4. How does Paul teach them that John's mission had passed away?
- V. 5. Were these men, therefore, up to this point disciples of Christ? How, then, are they called "disciples" in v. 1? Did all of John's disciples have to be rebaptized in joining the churches of Christ? What makes you think that the rebaptism spoken of in this verse was an unusual one?
- V. 6. What blessing followed it? See ch. 2:4; 8:17; 10:44-46.
- V. 8. Where was Paul at first accustomed to worship after his arrival in Ephesus? What does he seek to accomplish by his discussions with the Jews? How long did he continue to do this?
- V. 9. When persecution arose, to what place did Paul resort? Whom did he take with him? Who was this Tyrannus?
- V. 10. How long did he continue to do this? What churches in Ionia may have been planted at this time?
- V. 11. What did these special miracles refute? Had there been anything like them before? Matt. 9:20-22. What is the difference between an evil spirit and a disease? How did Paul support himself in Ephesus as in Corinth? Acts 20:34. Will you state in review some of the features of Paul's busy life? What were some of its blessed results?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."—1 THESS. 1:5.

Sept. 16.]

LESSON XII.

POWER OF THE WORD.—Acts 19 : 17-28. A.D. 57.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 17-20.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*; and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

21 ¶ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

The Temple and Image of Diana.—The temple of Diana (pronounced *Di-a'na*), at the head of the harbor of Ephesus, was said to be the most magnificent work of man that the sun in its course shone upon. Its age dated from a remote antiquity. Cræsus, the wealthy king of Lydia (B. C. 560-546), contributed to its erection; so did all the Greek cities. The fanatic Herostratus set fire to it on the night when Alexander was born (B. C. 356). This was one of the coincidences of ancient history. The temple was at once rebuilt with sumptuous magnificence. The ladies of Ephesus contributed jewelry to its restoration. The Ephesians embellished it from age to age, adding to it new decorations, statues, and pictures of the most famous artists. It was Oriental in architecture, hence it did not mount high in the air, like St. Peter's in Rome or St. Paul's in Lon-

don, but was broadly extensive, horizontal entablatures resting on vertical columns, each 60 feet in height and in number 127, making a total ground extent of 425 feet by 220 in breadth. Its glory, therefore, consisted in its colonnades surrounding the shrine of the Ephesian goddess. It was also the treasury building—"the Bank of England"—to Western Asia. The image of Diana, enshrined in the temple, was not the "tall huntress" afterward chosen by the Greeks to represent their mountain-goddess, but was more like the idols of the far East, an emblematic form of head and neck and many breasts above, terminating in a shapeless block below. It was built of wood. Rude as it was, it was an object of the profoundest veneration. It was believed, like the Palladium of Troy, the Minerva of the Athenian Acropolis, the Paphian Venus, and later still like the bronze angel on the Castle of San Angelo at Rome, to have "fallen down from the sky." Acts 19:35. In the ceremonies attending the worship of Diana little portable images, miniature resemblances, models, so to speak, of the larger shrines and idols, were carried in processions and often set up as household gods. A lucrative trade, therefore, naturally sprung up in Ephesus in the manufacture and sale of these shrines. Few would be apt to visit Ephesus without bearing away with them a memorial of her goddess and a model of her temple. These works of idolatrous art were borne all over the shores of the Mediterranean and far into Asia. The worship of Diana was recognized all over the world. Acts 19:27. So it remained under the Romans even to the reign of Constantine (A. D. 306-337). The temple was finally plundered and laid waste by the Goths. Its columns are possibly to be seen under the dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople, or in the naves of cathedrals in Rome.—See *Howson*.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Burning of magical books, vs. 17-19.	<i>Mon.</i> Acts 19:13-41. <i>Tues.</i> vs. 16, 17; Gal. 5:17-26.
II. Growth of the word, v. 20.	<i>Wed.</i> v. 19; 1 Kings 18.
III. Paul's future plans, v. 21.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 21; 1 Cor. 16:5-24.
IV. Still in Asia "for a season," v. 22.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 21; Rom. 15:20-33.
V. An uproar raised by Demetrius, vs. 23-28.	<i>Sat.</i> v. 27; Matt. 6:19-34. <i>Sun.</i> 1 Cor. 16.

EXPLANATIONS.—(17.) **And this**—*i. e.*, God's judgment, inflicted on itinerant Jewish impostors (see vs. 13-16, also Gal. 5:20; 2 Tim. 3:13; Luke 9:1); **was magnified**, in proportion to the alarm. See Isa. 26:9. Most holy are the uses sometimes of fear. (18.) **that believed came**, their consciences being moved; **confessed**, fully, reserving nothing; **and showed their deeds**—*i. e.*, of darkness, confessing and forsaking them. See Prov. 28:13; Matt. 3:6; Jas. 5:16. (19.) **of them also that used curious arts**, though not believing as the foregoing class, yet, having seen their superstition so signally condemned (vs. 13-16), openly renounced the

further practice of their sorceries by bringing together the books (manuscripts) that contained their mystic formularies, and burning them before all the people. These manuals of enchantment were very costly, the whole cost thus sacrificed or surrendered being as much as \$7500. (20.) **so mightily grew the word of God**, when these workers of evil were put to scorn. It was another discomfiture like that of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel. 1 Kings 18. (21.) **Achala**—i. e., Greece and particularly Corinth; **also see Rome**. Rom. 15 : 20; Acts 23 : 11. (22.) **Erastus** (2 Tim. 4 : 20); **stayed in Asia**, where he wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16 : 8, 9), and possibly his Epistle to the Galatians; **for a season**, in all, three years. (23.) **about that way**, the way in regard to Christian life. See ch. 9 : 2; 19 : 9, 32; 22 : 4; 24 : 14. (24.) **silver shrines**, small models either of the temple or of the image of Diana, or Artemis, the name given in Asia; these were used for private worship or worn as charms. (25.) **strs, ye know**, Demetrius places the greater god, self-interest, before the lesser goddess, Diana. Then he appeals with more effect to the people's religion. *Self* first, religion next! A union that many men seek still, but in vain. Matt. 6 : 24. (26.) **saying, that they be no gods**. Paul, however, had not openly attacked the divinities of the place. See v. 37. He was not an *ultraist* in religious reform. In extreme measures he rarely if ever indulged. Still, he may have spoken as in Athens. ch. 17 : 29. At all events, his preaching had greatly depreciated the merchandise of the craft of which Demetrius was a master-manufacturer; Alexander also, the coppersmith, may have been in the infuriated crowd. 2 Tim. 4 : 14. Then the great cry arose in honor of the goddess of the city; the infection seized the multitude; a general rush was made for the theatre, the obvious place for an assembly and a trial of Paul. It was an unroofed enclosure, with tiers of stone seats rising one above the other. It was a vast edifice. For account of proceedings here see vs. 29-41.

QUESTIONS.

On the Temple and Image of Diana.—Where was this temple built? What was it said to be? To what period does the first temple date? Who set it on fire? When? Who contributed jewelry to its subsequent erection? Might not the ladies nowadays profitably contribute more of their jewelry to the erection of the temple of Christianity in the earth? How did

the Ephesians subsequently embellish their temple? What was its style of architecture? The image of Diana was enshrined in the temple; what was its form? From whence was it believed to have fallen? Why was the making of models of the temple and image of Diana a lucrative employment? How far were they borne? When did the worship of Diana lose its hold of mankind? Who plundered and destroyed the temple? Where may some of its columns now be seen? Do men need to worship blocks of wood and stone to be idolaters? Why not? 2 Cor. 10:5.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 17. To what divine judgment does this verse allude? Why should men behold both "the goodness and the severity" of God?
- V. 18. What evidence have we in this verse of a genuine faith? Why can there be no repentance without forsaking sin? Is repentance a grace to be exercised in connection only with conversion? What follows from the forgetfulness that it is *ever* a grace of Christian life? See Rev. 2:5.
- V. 19. Who besides believers were influenced by Paul's preaching? What were these books that they burned? How valuable were they? If all bad books nowadays were to be burned, would there not be a "big fire"?
- V. 20. Of what victory for the truth in Old Testament days does all this remind us?
- V. 21. What further missionary journeys does Paul now plan? What great city does he intend finally to reach? Will he ever reach it as a voluntary traveller? How will he reach it?
- V. 22. Whom does he send before him? Why does he stay in Ephesus? What Epistles does he write here?
- V. 23. What remarkable event is now to be told?
- V. 24. What was the employment of Demetrius? What were these shrines?
- V. 25. What meeting does Demetrius call? For what god does he first plead? Is not this usually the case with worldly spirits?
- V. 26. To what Ephesian fanaticism does he now appeal? How far are his charges true? How far not true? What evidence have we that Paul was not an *ultraist*?
- V. 28. What was the effect of the speech of Demetrius? Where do the multitude rush? With whom? v. 29. What was Paul's first impulse? vs. 30, 31. Who finally appeased the people? v. 35. By what wise words? v. 35-41. Which, therefore, gains the victory, *Paganism* or *Christianity*? Is this struggle for mastery still going on? Which party will win in the end? Rev. 11:15.

"LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS."

And Grown Children too.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,"—HEB. 4 : 12.



Sept. 23.]

LESSON XIII.

PAUL AT MILETUS.—Acts 20 : 17-32. A. D. 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 22-27.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house;

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 ¶ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Historical Connection.—Paul finally leaves the church in Ephesus in peace (ch. 20:1); spends some time in revisiting and in extending the churches in Northern and Southern Greece, and then returns by way of Macedonia to Troas, on his way to Syria (2-6). At Troas he prolongs a farewell meeting until daybreak, and miraculously restores to life one of the congregation (7-12). Thence he sails down the *Ægean* Sea to Miletus (13-16), where he meets the elders of the Ephesian church, and takes leave of them in an affecting and impressive address. The distance between Miletus and Ephesus was hardly thirty miles, and a good road connected them together. "Thus, though Paul's stay in Miletus would be short, and it might be hazardous to attempt the journey to Ephesus himself, considering the state of public feeling there, he could yet hope for one more interview—if not with the whole of the Ephesian church, at least with those members of it whose responsibility was the greatest." Hence Paul's sending for its elders to come and visit him. He had not seen them for one or two years. They at once started for Miletus, and reached it easily the day after receiving the summons. Then was Paul comforted by the sight of his disciples. 2 Cor. 7:6. They were not long in gathering together, probably in some solitary spot upon the shore, to listen to Paul's address. The *Mæander* on which Miletus is built *meanders* still to the sea. The vast theatres of Miletus are silent ruins. But the words of the wayworn apostle to a few despised Gentiles are among the words the living will not "willingly let die." They give to Christianity a tenderness and an affection that remind us of the family in Bethany, and of the tears of Olivet. Christianity is, therefore, as truly *human* as it is truly *divine*.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Ephesian elders called to Miletus, v. 17.
- II. Appeal to their knowledge, vs. 18-21.
- III. Forebodings of suffering, vs. 22-24.
- IV. Solemn counsel, vs. 25-31.
- V. Commendation, v. 32.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon.	Acts 20.
Tues.	v. 18; 1 Thess. 2:1-12.
Wed.	v. 19; Ps. 126.
Thurs.	v. 21; Rev. 2:1-7.
Fri.	v. 24; 2 Tim. 4:1-8.
Sat.	v. 28; 1 Pet. 1:18-25.
Sun.	v. 32; Eph. 2:13-22.

EXPLANATIONS.—(17.) called the elders, or *presbyters*, a term brought over from the Jewish synagogues. The same officers were called, in Gentile communities, *bishops*. *Presbyters*

and *bishops* are terms which refer to the same office in the early Christian church—presbyters, on account of the age of the persons generally selected for that office; bishop, or overseer, indicating his work. The only officers in the Christian church mentioned in the New Testament were the elders or bishops and the deacons. The elders spoken of in this verse had the oversight of the church as ministers and teachers. (18.) **ye know**, “happy is he who can thus begin an address to his people by an appeal to their knowledge.”—*Bengel*. This method is highly characteristic of Paul. Compare 1 Thess. 2: 5-11; 2 Thess. 3: 7-9; 1 Cor. 9: 4-15; 2 Cor. 12: 14, etc. (19.) **many tears**, tears of *sorrow*, like those of Christ in Gethsemane (2 Cor. 11: 23-29; Col. 1: 24; Acts 9: 15, 16; Gal. 6: 17); tears of *charity*, like those of Christ upon Olivet overlooking Jerusalem (compare v. 31 with ch. 19: 10; 9: 11; Phil. 3: 18; 2 Cor. 2: 4); tears of *tenderness*, like those of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. See 1 Thess. 2: 5-12; 1 Cor. 9: 5; Phil. 2: 27; 2 Tim. 1: 5. Tears were one of the mighty forces of Paul’s apostleship. “*From the day when Jesus purchased us upon the cross, all that is great, powerful, healthful, is tinged with sadness.*”—*Adolphe Monod*. **Temptations**—*i. e.*, trials of faith. (20.) **publicly, and from house to house**, the range of a minister’s usefulness. “A house-going minister makes a church-going people.” The Scotch ministers do a great deal of visiting, are out a good part of every day among the people; the best of ministers too. (21.) **repentance**—*i. e.*, the repentance that is meet. ch. 2: 38; Luke 24: 47. (22.) **bound in spirit**—*i. e.*, under a powerful impulse of mind. Howson translates “in spirit foredoomed to chains.” But Dr. Hackett calls this too artificial, unlike the simplicity of the utterance. (23.) **witnesseth**, not directly to Paul, but to others speaking as prophets in these cities to Paul. See ch. 21: 4. (24.) “In the sublime language of this verse we hear distinctly the voice of the man who, on approaching the end of his career, could say, ‘I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,’” etc. (see 2 Tim. 4: 6-8, also Phil. 2: 17); **the gospel**, better the “good news.” (25.) **I know**, Paul seems to be quite omniscient with reference to others, but not with reference to himself; he himself must walk by faith. See v. 22. (26.) **pure from the blood of all men**, a man who can say that can die happy. (27.) **all the counsel of God**, the sum of which with Paul was the

preaching of repentance and faith unto the Gentiles. Eph. 3: 2-11; see v. 21. (28.) **overseers**, the same word (episcopous) is elsewhere translated "bishops." Had it been so translated here, the two terms, "elders" (*presbuterous*), in v. 17, and "overseers" (*episcopous*), in v. 28, would have appeared to be synonymous, as they really are; **to feed**, rather "to shepherd" (see John 21:17); **purchased with his blood**, as its ransom price. See carefully Rom. 3:25; 1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; 2:24. (29.) **grievous wolves**, false teachers. See Tim. 2:17; Rev. 2:2-7. (32.) **build you up**, God is the author, his word the *instrument*, of this building up (compare Heb. 4:12; Isa. 49:2; Jer. 23:29; Rom. 1:16); **inheritance** (Matt. 19:29; 25:34; Rev. 21:7); **which are sanctified**, having spiritual blessings in large measure.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—What further journeys has Paul taken since our last lesson with him in Ephesus? Will you trace his third missionary tour as near as you can from its beginning? Where is Miletus? How far is it from Ephesus? Why was it hazardous for Paul to go there? Until the Lord leads us plainly into danger, should we not avoid it?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 17. Whom does Paul wish to see? Who *were* the elders of the church? By what other name were they called? Is not your pastor a bishop in the New Testament sense? What two officers only did the New Testament church have? Did they have a pope? A cardinal? A bishop or presiding elder in the sense that Episcopalians and Methodists have now? So far as we know, was not every church in the days of the New Testament strictly independent?
- V. 18. Where did Paul and these elders have their interview? To what testimony did Paul appeal? Must not a man be very honest and sincere to imitate him in this respect?
- V. 19. From what you have learned of Paul, should you take him to be a "soft" kind of man? Was it, then, quite manly in him to weep so much? How may his tears be classified? Is there much usefulness without tears?
- V. 20. How entirely did Paul devote himself to the cause of Christ? Did he try to be a good preacher or pastor, or both? What makes you think so?
- V. 21. What truths did he emphatically teach?
- V. 22. What does he mean by the words "I go bound in spirit to Jerusalem"? Of what was he ignorant?

- V. 23. What points in his prospects were revealed to him?
- V. 24. Instead of being disturbed by them, what does he care most to do?
- V. 26. To what does he again appeal in regard to his fidelity?
- V. 27. How far is ignorance of Christian doctrine an excuse for not preaching it? Is all truth to be understood before it is received?
- V. 28. What is the chief business of a minister? What motive should lead him to this careful shepherding?
- V. 29. What other motive is given in this verse?
- V. 32. To what does Paul commend his Ephesian brethren? Why to these? With what words does Paul's address close? vs. 33-35. What affecting scene then follows? vs. 36, 38.

Selections.—"If I cannot go to Worms in good health," said Luther to the elector, "I will be carried there, sick as I am. I place the matter in the Lord's hands. My life is of little consequence."—*Hist. of Ref.*, vol. 2, p. 195. "Thou people of tears, awake! Paul, who wept so much, does he now regret his tears? To-day like him, to-morrow with him!"—*Monod's St. Paul*, p. 71.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."—2 COR. 4:5.

Sept. 30.] LESSON XIV.

THIRD QUARTER REVIEW.

Topic.—PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS.

Motto.—"Have these things always in remembrance."—2 Pet. 1:15.

Author's Note.—It seems to me that a fitting review of the past quarter's study would be a review of the three missionary journeys of Paul, upon which, during this quarter, the Sunday-schools have spent their entire thought. It is desirable not only to learn the word of God, but to hold it when learned. A review lesson, therefore, if it be a review lesson, and not something else, as many reviews are, is of value only in so far as it succeeds in fixing what has been learned. It clinches the nails that are driven by the pas-

tors, officers, or teachers in the large assemblies of our Sunday-schools. I have prepared this review lesson under separate heads, as will appear below. Questions are then added, to be used firstly by teachers and classes, and secondly by superintendents or pastors, as the chief officer of the school may be, the latter questions to be asked in connection with the closing exercises of the school.—G. S. A.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon.	Gal. 1.	Thurs.	Gal. 4.
Tues.	" 2.	Fri.	" 5.
Wed.	" 3.	Sat.	" 6.
Sun. 2 Cor. 12.			

I. Places visited by Paul on his three Missionary Journeys :

(a) *First Journey* (A. D. 45-47).—Antioch in Syria, Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, Attalia, Antioch in Syria ; in all, about two years.

(b) *Second Journey* (A. D. 51-54).—Antioch in Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Antioch. We may allot three years and a half to this journey.

(c) *Third Journey* (A. D. 54 or 55-58 or 59).—Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Troas, Macedonia. Northern Greece, Southern Greece, Macedonia, Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Ptolemais. Cæsarea, Jerusalem ; in all, about four years.

II. Companions of Paul :

(a) *On First Journey*.—Barnabas and Mark (13 : 2-4, 7, 13, 43; 14 : 1, 12, 14, 21, 26). Mark broke away at Perga. 13 : 7.

(b) *On Second Journey*.—Silas (15 : 36-40), Timothy at Lystra (16 : 1-3), Luke at Troas. 16 : 8, 11. Luke breaks away evidently at Philippi, probably on professional business. Silas and Timothy remain at Berea, when Paul goes on to Athens. 18 : 14. They come to him again at Corinth. v. 5. Leaving whom behind him, he departed for Syria, together with Priscilla and Aquila (v. 18), touched at Ephesus, left the two friends there, and pushed on alone to Cæsarea, Jerusalem, and back to Antioch.

(c) *On Third Journey*.—Timothy and Erastus (19 : 22), Gaius and Aristarchus. v. 29. On his return trip from Macedonia there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea ; Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica ; Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus of Asia. 20 : 3, 4. Luke seems to have joined the party again at Philippi (20 : 6), not having been with the apos-

tle for seven years (A. D. 51-58 or 59). Now he accompanies Paul to Miletus, Tyre, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem.

III. Paul's Plan of Missionary Work :

(a) *Through the Synagogue*.—So at Salamis in Cyprus (13 : 5); so at Antioch in Pisidia (13 : 14-16; so at Iconium (14 : 1); so at Amphipolis (17 : 1, 2); so at Berea (17 : 10); so at Athens (17 : 16, 17); so at Corinth (18 : 4); so at Ephesus. 18 : 26.

(b) *Among the Gentiles*.—As at Paphos before *Sergius Paulus* (13 : 7); as to *Lydia* in Philippi, "by the river side" (16 : 13); as to *Athenians* at Mars' Hill (17 : 16-34); as in the house of *Justus*, in Corinth, "hard by the synagogue" (18 : 7); as at the school or hall of *Tyrannus* in Ephesus (19 : 9); as to the elders on the sea-shore at Miletus. For the great reason of Paul's working first in the synagogue, and then among Gentiles, see ch. 13 : 46, 47; 18 : 6; Rom. 11 : 11.

IV. Results of Paul's Missionary Work :

(a) *Converts of Note*.—*Sergius Paulus* (13 : 12), *Timothy* (16 : 1), *Lydia* (16 : 14), "honorable women" in Berea (17 : 12), *Dionysius* and *Damaris* in Athens (17 : 34), *Crispus*, the ruler of the synagogue, in Corinth. 18 : 8.

(b) *Churches Planted*.—In many of the cities visited; in Pamphylia, Galatia, Phrygia; in Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth; in Cilicia and Syria.

(c) *In Inspired Epistles*.—To the *Thessalonians* from Corinth (A. D. 52); to the *Galatians* and to the *Corinthians* from Ephesus (A. D. 55-57); second Epistle to the *Corinthians* from Macedonia (A. D. 57); to the *Romans* from Corinth (A. D. 58).

(d) *Judaism Corrected and in Spirit Enlarged*.—As in the decision of the council at Jerusalem bearing upon the obligations of the ceremonial law (ch. 15), but chiefly in the unfolding of the drama of the conversion of the Gentile world to Jesus Christ.

(e) *Paganism Proscribed*.—As in the case of *Elymas*, the sorcerer, in Paphos (13 : 6-11); as when about to be worshipped as gods in Lystra (14 : 11-18); in the decision of the council at Jerusalem (15 : 19, 20); in casting out "the spirit of divination" at Philippi (16 : 16-18); in the great speech at Mars' Hill (17 : 19-31); in the judgment upon "evil spirits" at Ephesus (19 : 13-16); in the suppression of the craft of Demetrius in Ephesus. 19 : 23-41. All the observances of paganism fell under the unsparing proscription of Christianity.

V. Paul's Spirit as seen in his Travels :

(1.) *Obedient*. 13 : 4; 16 : 9-12; 20 : 22, 23. (2.) *Resolute*. 15 : 36-40; 18 : 6; 19 : 30; 20 : 24. (3.) *Manly*. 16 : 35-39. (4.) *Judicious*. 16 : 3; 17 : 1; 20 : 16, 17. (5.) *Eloquent*. 17 : 22-31. (6.) *Humble*. 14 : 11-15. (7.) *Joyful in Suffering*. 16 : 25. (8.) *Industrious*. 18 : 1-4. (9.) *Tender*. 20 : 19, 31, 38. (10.) *Thoroughly Consecrated to Christ*. 20 : 24.

QUESTIONS.

On Places Visited.—Name the places visited on Paul's first missionary journey. How long was its duration? Did Paul ever visit Cyprus again? What companion of Paul did visit it? ch. 15: 39, 40. Name the places visited on Paul's second missionary journey. Where did Paul first touch the Ægean Sea on this journey? Where did he then sail? From what place did he go to the sea again? (17: 13, 14, embarking at Dium.) To what city did he then sail? From what city did he return to Syria? 18: 18. How much time must be given to this journey? Name the course taken and the places visited on Paul's third missionary journey. In what city did he tarry the longest on this journey? In what city did he bid adieu to the Ephesian elders?

On Paul's Companions.—Who were Paul's two companions on his first journey? How far did Mark go with him? Who were Paul's five companions on his second journey, and from what places did they travel with him? Who were his companions on his third missionary journey? To what nations did they severally belong?

On Paul's Plan of Work.—What was Paul's first plan of work? What advantages did the synagogues offer to him? To whom did he turn when rejected by the Jews? Why? 13: 46. In what Gentile houses did he preach the gospel? Where in Europe by the sea? Where in Asia by the sea did he take leave of his friends?

On Results of Paul's Work. Will you name some of the distinguished converts under Paul's labors? Why were there so few? 1 Cor. 26-29. Why were there a few? In what districts and cities were there churches planted? What was the influence of Christianity, as advocated by Paul, upon Judaism? What victories did Paul win over paganism? What Epistles were written in the time of our studies? Where written? When?

On Paul's Spirit as seen in our Studies.—Where is Paul seen to be obedient? Where resolute? Where manly? Where judicious? Where eloquent? Where humble? Where joyful in suffering? Where industrious? Where tender? Where thoroughly consecrated to Christ?

QUESTIONS FOR SUPERINTENDENT.

Scholars.—Where did Paul start from on his missionary journeys? Who set him apart to the Gentiles? In what island have we seen him? In what city was he about to be worshipped? In what city was he stoned? In what city did he have a wonderful vision? In what city was he imprisoned? In what city did he preach a most eloquent sermon? In what city did he work at tent-making? What was the name of the great idol of Ephesus? Who made models of it? Where did we leave him in our last lesson? Where did he say he was to go? What was Paul's great ambition? 1 Cor. 2: 2.

In closing sing to CORONATION the hymn—

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

“Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all.

“Oh that, with yonder sacred tribe,
We at his feet may fall!
We’ll join the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all.”

GOLDEN TEXT.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

—COL. 3 : 23.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Oct. 7.]

LESSON I.

PAUL AT CESAREA.—Acts 21 : 8-15. A. D. 58 or 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 10-14.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

Historical Connection.—From his most affecting leave-taking of the elders at Ephesus, on the sea-shore at Miletus, Paul hastened on his voyage to Syria and Jerusalem by the most direct course. If we follow the Map (which see), we can mark his course according to Acts 21 : 1-8. First to the island of *Cos*: thence to *Rhodes*, an illustrious island, the most eastern in the Ægean Sea, celebrated not only in Grecian days, but also as the last place where the Christians of the East held out against the advancing Saracens. Here stood "*The Colossus of Rhodes*," at the entrance to the harbor, though there is no authority for the statement that its legs extended over its mouth. It was twelve years in erecting (B. C. 282-280), in height 155 feet, and cost "three hundred talents" (in gold, \$8,000,000). It was in bronze. *Chares* was its artist, of *Lindus*, in Rhodes. It was reckoned among the seven wonders of the world, but was overthrown by an earthquake A. C. 224. It does not appear that Paul landed at Rhodes from the ship. He sailed thence to *Patara*, in Lycia. Here he took a ship bound for Phenicia, and slighting *Cyprus* on the left hand arrived at Tyre, where the ship was to unload. This was an ancient city. Josh. 19 : 29; 2 Sam. 5 : 11; 24 : 7. It was distant from Joppa, to which place Hiram sent wood in floats, less than seventy-four geographical miles: and as Joppa was thirty-two miles only from Jerusalem, the whole distance from Tyre to Jerusalem was not more

than one hundred and six geographical miles. It was not much more than thirty miles from Nazareth by land, so liable are we to be deceived by distances in Palestine and Syria. Tyre had an existence for upward of three thousand years. The Saracens took it from the Christians (A. D. 1291), and it never recovered from the blow. "The once famous city is now no other than a heap of ruins." Thus the prophecy concerning it, uttered by Ezekiel (B. C. 593), was fulfilled. Ezek. 26: 1-5. At Tyre, Paul was cheered by a welcome from certain disciples of whose existence in the city he seems not to have been aware. With them he spent a whole week. Here the prophetic gift was employed in warning him against going to Jerusalem. Here, too, Paul gained an amount of affection that is remarkable for a week's acquaintance only. See Acts 21: 5, 6. Then Paul sailed to Ptolemais, called *Accho* in the Old Testament, and *Akka*, or *St. Jean d'Acre* of crusading times, about thirty miles south of Tyre and eight from Carmel, and called Ptolemais, from Ptolemy, one of the kings of Egypt. Thence Paul proceeded, apparently by land, to Cæsarea, on the coast, a few miles south of Carmel, seventy miles from Jerusalem. So Paul continues on his way to the sufferings appointed for him. Acts 20: 22, 23.

ANALYSIS.

- I. In Cæsarea with Philip, vs. 8, 9.
- II. Trials again foretold, vs. 10, 11.
- III. Protest of affection, v. 12.
- IV. Affection overcome by duty, vs. 13, 14.
- V. Paul on the way to Jerusalem, v. 15.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 21: 19.
Tues. v. 3; Ezek. 26: 1-21.
Wed. v. 8; Acts 8: 26-40.
Thurs. v. 8; Acts 10: 1-24.
Fri. v. 9; Joel 2: 18-32.
Sat. v. 11; Jer. 13: 1-11.
Sun. v. 12; Matt. 10: 16-39.

EXPLANATIONS.—(8.) **we**, including Luke, Trophimus, and Aristarchus (see 20: 4); **departed** (see v. 7); **unto Cæsarea**, built by Herod the Great, midway between Joppa and Ptolemais, at this time the residence of the Roman procurator Felix, and containing a great many Gentiles. The following passages show how important a place it was in the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 8: 40; 9: 30; 10: 1-24; 11: 11; 12: 19; 18: 22; 21: 8, 16; 23: 23, 33; 25: 1, 4, 6, 13; **house of Philip**, one of the seven almoners, or deacons (6: 5); afterwards a laborer as an evangelist in Samaria and on the way to Gaza (8: 5, 26); then making Cæsarea the scene of his labors. 8: 40. It is now about twenty-five years since we have met him. (9.) **which did prophesy**. See ch. 2: 17; 13: 1; Joel 2: 28, 29. (10.) **named Agabus**, possessing the prophetic gift in the strict sense of that expression, as a foreteller of events, besides being an inspired teacher, the usual

significance of the word in the New Testament. (11.) **he took Paul's girdle** (see 1 Sam. 15 : 27, 28; Jer. 13 : 1-11; John 13 : 12-14); **bound his own hands**—*i. e.*, Agabas performed this symbolic act on himself, not on Paul. "This served to place the event foretold more vividly before them; the scene, being thus acted out before their eyes, was rendered present, real, beyond what any mere verbal declaration could have made of it."—*Huckett*. See 1 Kings 22 : 11; Isa. 20 : 1, etc.; Ezek. 4 : 1, etc.; **So shall the Jews**, as the procuring cause (24 : 27); **into the hands of the Gentiles**. See 28 : 17. (12.) **they of that place**—*i. e.*, of Cæsarea; Philip and the believers with him in the city; **besought him not to go**, so Luther, when on his way to the city of Worms, was entreated by his friends not to go. His answer is well known : "Although there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the housetops, I will still go thither."—*Besser*. (13.) **What mean ye to weep ?** how strange was this question from a man who often had tears himself to weep ! It is, however, an instructive example of duty to Christ overcoming natural grief; **for I am ready not to be bound only**, etc. The best means of extricating ourselves from difficulties of every kind is a readiness to do and to suffer whatever the Lord bids. See Phil. 3 : 10. "*A Christianity without the cross is a Christianity without Christ.*"—*Adolphe Monod*. (14.) **the will of the Lord be done**, the Christian's watchword on his journey through life.

" "Thy will be done !" Though shrouded o'er
Our path with gloom, one comfort, one,
Is ours : to breathe, while we adore,—
"Thy will be done !" "

(15.) **took up our carriages**, rather, "having packed up our baggage." The word "carriages" is always used in the Bible in the old English sense of *things carried*,—*i. e.*, burdens. **to Jerusalem**, seventy miles away.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—After leaving Miletus, to what island forty miles south did Paul sail? Then to what island fifty miles S. E. of Coos? What one of the "seven wonders of the world" was at Rhodes? To what sea-port seventy miles farther east did Paul now sail? Thence to what city in Phœnicia three hundred and forty miles away? In making this

east voyage, did Paul sail north or south of Cyprus? Where was Tyre? How old a city was it? How far was it from Joppa? How far from Jerusalem? What king of Tyre was friendly to Solomon? How did he show his kindness? When was Tyre destroyed? By whom? What prophet predicted its overthrow? When? What is Tyre now? What friends did Paul find in Tyre? To what place did he then sail? How far was Ptolemais from Mt. Carmel? Thence to what city did Paul proceed? By land or water?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 8. Who were some of Paul's travelling companions to Cæsarea? Where was Cæsarea? By whom was it built? Of whom was it the residence? Where do we first meet with Philip? Did any one precede him in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles? Where did he preach it after the death of Stephen? What court-officer did he baptize? How long is it since he came to reside in Cæsarea? As the earlier preacher, why was not Philip irritated on account of Paul's superiority?
- V. 9. What are the two significations of the word "prophecy" in the New Testament?
- V. 10. How had Agabus been of service to Paul before? Acts 11 : 28.
- V. 11. How does Agabus point out in symbol the treatment Paul is to receive in Jerusalem? What was his direct prophecy? Were the words of Agabus fulfilled? See v. 33 and ch. 24.
- V. 12. How far is human affection to settle a case of Christian duty? What does Jesus say about this? Matt. 10 : 37. How many parties begged Paul not to go? Did they not in so doing resist the Holy Ghost?
- V. 13. How far did the *feelings* of his friends rule Paul's conduct? Is natural grief treated indifferently or rudely by Christianity? Where did the Saviour weep? Where did Paul weep?
- V. 14. How did Paul's firm purpose change the feelings of his friends? What is to be learned from their conduct? If more men had firmness of purpose, would there not be fewer faint hearts in our cities and towns? What should be the motto of all in the journey of life? Is this prayer easy to offer?

To Superintendents.—It would be a profitable closing exercise for you to begin with Paul at Ephesus, and to follow him step by step, island by island, and city by city, by the use of the Map, to the city of Cæsarea, then to Jerusalem, on the way to which city the lesson leaves him. Or you might ask some teacher or scholar to do so for you in the hearing of the whole school.

A Hard Prayer to Offer.—"Who can stand at the end of the avenue along which all his pleasant thoughts and wishes are

blossoming like flowers and send these terrible words, 'Thy will be done!' crashing down through it? I think it is the most fearful prayer to pray in the world."—*Beecher*. Paul's friends, however, so prayed, and so did Paul, and many more have so prayed since their day.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself."—Acts 20 : 24.

Oct. 14.]

LESSON II.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.—Acts 21 : 27-39. A. D. 58 or 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 30-36.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 And Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

Paul puts Himself under a Nazarite Vow.—Paul has come to Jerusalem, the fifth visit to this city since his conversion. *cn.* 9:26; 11:30; 15:2; 18:21, 22; 21:15, 17. He is welcomed by the assembled elders of the church (17-19), and by their advice aims to conciliate the Jewish Christians in Judea by joining some Nazarites in their devotions. 20-26. He does this expressly to prove himself a faithful Jew—a purpose on Paul's part that emerges at every point of his history. He had kept the Gentile believers free from the yoke of the law, for this was in accordance with the decision of the Jewish council; but it was very generally reported of him that "he taught all the *Jews among the Gentiles* to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." Having now a practical opportunity of refuting this charge, he takes a Nazarite vow with four others who had already done so, and pays the expenses of all himself, the value of eight lambs, four runs, oil, flour, etc. The regulations for this vow are given in *Num.* 6:1-21. The Nazarite was forbidden to drink wine, to cut his hair, or to approach any dead body. If he were not a Nazarite for life, like Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, but for a term of years or days, when the period was fulfilled, due notice was to be given thereof, and at the expiration of the full time he was to present himself at the temple with offerings prescribed by law, and to have the hair of his separation (or time of consecration) shaved. There was an apartment in the temple set apart for these purposes. To be a Nazarite was regarded by the Jewish nation as most honorable. There being, therefore, four Jewish Christians already Nazarites, it was thought that Paul would ingratiate himself into public favor by joining himself to their number; and, as these four were poor, that it would be an act of generosity on Paul's part to assume the charges of the offerings they were to present when their time was fulfilled. Paul did as advised. He acted in good conscience to prevent a rupture (24:16), but with what results our lesson will show.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul seized by a mob, *vs.* 27-30.
- II. Its violence interrupted, *vs.* 31, 32.
- III. Paul brought to the castle, *vs.* 33-36.
- IV. Colloquy at the entrance, *vs.* 37-39.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 21:17-40.
Tues. v. 19; *Rom.* 15:14-21.
Wed. v. 23, 24; *Num.* 6:1-21.
Thurs. v. 28; Acts 6:8-15.
Fri. v. 36; *Luke* 23:13-25.
Sat. v. 39; *Rom.* 11.
Sun. Ps. 46.

EXPLANATIONS.—(27.) **the seven days**, during which his vow was to last; **of Asia**—*i. e.*, of Proconsular Asia, where Paul had labored so long. It was near to the time of Pentecost—a festival attracting Jews from all over the world. Acts 20 : 16. These Jews from Ephesus probably recognized *Trophimus* (v. 29) as their fellow-townsmen. (28.) **this is the man that teacheth**, a false charge with some grains of truth, like that against Stephen (ch. 6 : 13); **brought Greeks**—*i. e.*, Gentiles (Rom. 1 : 16); **into the temple**—*i. e.*, into those apartments forbidden to any but Jews, the Gentiles having a court of their own. (29.) **had before seen**, what if they had? Paul is no less a Jew for mingling in proper places with Trophimus. 20 : 4. He had not introduced him into the part of the temple interdicted to foreigners. “*Zealots often err in their suppositions.*”—*Bengel*. (30.) **drew him out of the temple**, where no human blood could be shed (2 Kings 11 : 15); still, they were anxious to kill Paul without delay; **were shut**, as a caution against further disturbance. Dr. Ripley says, “Perhaps the measure was designed to prevent Paul’s return and taking refuge at the altar.” But he seems to err in this, for this privilege was given to *accidental* murderers only. Ex. 21 : 13, 14. (31.) **about to kill him**, on the strength possibly of the inscription on one of the pillars leading into the Jewish courts: “*On pain of death let no foreigners further go.*”—*Philo*; **tidings came**, literally, “a report went up;” **the chief captain**—*i. e.*, Claudius Lysias. 23 : 26. “It was but the work of a moment to convey to him the information. He had his station in the castle of Antonia, which was on a rock or hill at the north-west angle of the temple area. The tower at the south-east corner of the castle was nearly a hundred feet high, overlooking the whole temple with its courts, and communicating with each of its northern and western porticoes by flights of stairs, by which the Roman garrison of one thousand men could at any time enter the court of the temple and prevent tumults. (32.) **centurions**, each with a complement of one hundred men; **and ran down unto them**, “Paul owed his life to this despatch.”—*Hackett*. (33.) **commanded him to be bound**, to intimidate him and to satisfy the Jews. (36.) **Away with him**, treating the servant as his Lord. Luke 23 : 18; John 19 : 15; Acts 22 : 22. (38.) **that Egyptian**, until that moment Lysias had taken Paul to be an Egyptian deceiver and murderer; but when he heard Paul

speaking in Greek, he knew that this could not be the case. See *Bell. Jud.* ii. 13. 5; *Antiq.* xx. 7. 6. (39.) a **Jew of Tarsus** (see 22 : 3; Rom. 11 : 1; 2 Cor. 11 : 22; Phil. 3 : 5); a **citizen** (22 : 25-29); of **no mean city**, ranking with Athens and Alexandria, and made a *free city* by the emperor Augustus—that is, free from tribute, with magistrates and laws of its own choice.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul putting Himself under the Nazarite's Vow.—On reaching Jerusalem, how was Paul received? v. 17. Whom did he at once visit? What did he at once announce? There were a great number of Christian Jews in Judea, but on account of what were they greatly disturbed? What do they propose to Paul to do? What was a Nazarite? Who were Nazarites for life? How were Nazarites esteemed? How could Paul be a Nazarite without any sacrifice of principle? Why is it wise, if possible, to give no offence to other people's consciences? Besides becoming a Nazarite with these four Christian Jews, what did Paul do? Did he surrender, in doing this, the privileges of Gentile Christians? v. 25; 15 : 20.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 27. What week is referred to by these "seven days"? Who were these Jews of Asia? Why were they in Jerusalem?
- V. 28. What did they cry out, as though Paul were some wild beast hard to catch? What charges did they allege against Paul? If at all, how had he spoken against the law? How against the temple? 7 : 48, 49. Who are meant by Greeks? Did the Gentiles have the freedom of the whole temple? How much of it did they have?
- V. 29. What reason is given for supposing that Paul had polluted the temple? Are the suppositions of over-zealous people always well founded?
- V. 30. What is now done with Paul? Why was he taken out of the temple? Why were the doors shut?
- V. 31. By what was this mob-violence interrupted? Who was this chief captain? Where was he stationed? Describe the castle of Antonia. How did it communicate with the temple?
- V. 32. To what does Paul now owe his life?
- V. 33. Why is Paul now bound? How?
- V. 34. How are the questions of Lysias answered? What is done with Paul?
- V. 35. How is he pursued by the crowd? Who protected him?
- V. 36. What new mob-cry is raised? Where have we heard it before? Did the Jewish nation after this ever have power to harm a hair of Paul's head? In whose keeping shall we see him after this?

V. 37. Describe the interview Paul had with Lysias before going into the castle. Whose mistake is corrected? Whose citizenship is proclaimed? What request is granted now to Paul? vs. 37, 40. What scripture is illustrated by this lesson? Ps. 76 : 10. Recite "Golden Text."

Reflection.—"The days of Paul's manly strength are passing away, but his Master provides for him a refuge here and there from Jewish persecution, so that he may be useful even in the period of declining life."—*Dr. William Hague.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you."—JOHN 15 : 20.

Oct. 21.]

LESSON III.

PAUL AND THE BIGOTED JEWS.—Acts 22 : 17-30.

A. D. 58 or 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 17-21.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the

castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him; and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Paul's Address on the Stairs of Castle Antonia.—

Permission being given him, Paul stood on the stairs of the castle of Antonia, beckoned with his characteristic and emphatic gesture, and addressed the people below in the temple area. He had spoken to Lysias in Greek, but now he spoke in Hebrew, or *Aramaie*, the current language at this time of the Hebrew people. He spoke with admirable wisdom and skill, bringing forward prominently whatever marked him as a Jew, in order to refute the charges of traitorous hostility to the religion of his fathers. He showed that, though a native of Tarsus, he was a Hebrew by birth, language, and education, and that he *had been jealous* for Judaism and violent against Christianity; that he had received Christianity only in consequence of a divine vision and under the guidance of a well-known devout Jew, Ananias; and that against his *own earnest desire* to remain in Jerusalem he had been sent forth by divine command, when worshipping in the temple, to preach to the Gentiles. See *Anno. Bible*. "*They gave him audience unto this word,*" and then their animosity broke forth anew. The declaration of God's free grace to the Gentiles stung them to fury. They lifted up their frantic cries; they cast off their clothes in uncontrollable rage; they threw dust into the air, as if demanding speedy justice. Whereupon the chief captain, ignorant of Hebrew, and supposing that Paul had given some good occasion for offence, ordered him to be brought into the castle and examined by scourging. The soldiers were already binding him with thongs to the scourging-post when he avowed his Roman citizenship; learning which, the chief captain was surprised, for he had inflicted the indignity of bonds upon a free-born Roman, while he, an imperial freeman, had only obtained this citizenship for a great sum. Having discovered that the question at issue was a mere religious one, Lysias summoned the Sanhedrin to meet on the following day, when, having loosed Paul from his bonds, he placed him before them. The magic of the rights of a Roman citizen had thus saved Paul from scourging in the barracks of Antonia. See 2 Cor. 11: 23-25. But to return to Paul's address, the latter portion only of which our lesson considers.

ANALYSIS.	READINGS.
I. Paul's account of his trance, v. 17.	<i>Mon.</i> Acts 22 : 1-30.
II. God's word to him in it, vs. 18-21.	<i>Tues.</i> v. 17; Acts 9 : 23-30.
III. Mob-violence renewed, vs. 22, 23.	<i>Wed.</i> vs. 19, 20; 1 Tim. 1 : 12-17.
IV. Paul about to be scourged, vs. 24-26.	<i>Thurs.</i> v. 22; Luke 11 : 37-54.
V. The chief captain perplexed, vs. 27-29.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 28; ch. 16 : 34-40.
VI. Paul before the Sanhedrin, v. 30.	<i>Sat.</i> Gal. 2.
	<i>SUN.</i> v. 30; Matt. 26 : 57-75.

EXPLANATIONS.—(17.) **again to Jerusalem**—*i. e.*, from his abode in Damascus (A. D. 39); **I was in a trance**, Luke does not speak of this in Acts 9 : 26. But the wish of the brethren then and God's revelation to Paul in a trance were one. (19.) **And I said**, Paul thought that his former zeal *against* Christ, contrasted with his present zeal *for* him, must make a deep impression on his countrymen; but he was mistaken, as his subsequent history even to the present time showed. (20.) **thy martyr**—*i. e.*, witness, afterward applied by way of eminence to those who suffered death for Christ. See Rev. 17 : 6. (22.) **lifted up their voices**, verifying (v. 18); **it is not fit**, rather, "it has not been fit;" he long ago deserved to die. (23.) **cast off their clothes**, madly throwing them up and around; **threw dust in the air**, to inflame the populace. (24.) **to be brought**, as if now certainly guilty of crime; **examined by scourging**, in order to extort a confession. Alas! how often have methods of cruelty been resorted to since the days of Paul vastly more torturing than scourging-posts, and that by professedly Christian tribunals! (25.) **as they bound him with thongs**—*i. e.*, "stretched him forward for the thongs or scourge, consisting of two or more lashes or cords;" **that stood by**, superintending this inquisition; **that is a Roman**, "it was an evil deed, as Cicero says, to bind a Roman citizen; it was a heinous crime to scourge him;" **And**—*i. e.*, and that, too, uncondemned. (26.) **tell me**, "the inquiry indicates his surprise that a man in Paul's situation should possess a privilege which he himself had procured at great expense."—*Hackett*. (28.) **this freedom**, citizenship; **Paul said**, **But I was free born**, some one of Paul's ancestors doubt-

less had obtained the privilege of citizenship, and it descended to him by inheritance. This citizenship aided Paul frequently and greatly. See 16 : 37. (29.) **they departed**, desisting, however, for that day only ; **was afraid**, because of the penalty for his acts ; **that he was a Roman**, the declaration, "*I am a Roman citizen*," was a guaranty of safety against injustice throughout the Roman world. (30.) **loosed him from his bonds**, for the time only, as if to do so wholly would have shown signs of weakness ; **brought Paul down**, from Antonia to the council-chamber.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul's Address.—Who gave Paul liberty to speak ? Where in the castle did Paul speak ? In what language ? Was it by natural or supernatural gift that he had spoken to Lysias in Greek ? What does Paul in his address carefully bring forward ? Against what charge does he reply ? 21 : 28. How does he say he received Christianity ? v. 6, etc. On what errand was Paul going when converted ? How did the memory of this persecuting spirit affect Paul ? 1 Tim. 1 : 12-17. What blessed doctrines does he teach in 1 Tim. 1 : 12-17 ?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 17. When Paul returned to Jerusalem, what occurred ? How long after his conversion was this ? Gal. 1 : 17, 18. Where was he praying ? What is a trance ? Compare 10 : 10.
- V. 18. Whom did Paul see ? What did the Lord say to him ? Who are meant by "they" ? Why would they not receive Paul's testimony ? ch. 9 : 26.
- V. 19. What history does Paul now review ? Why ?
- V. 21. What did the Lord now say to Paul ? How "far hence" did Paul travel among the Gentiles ? Rom. 15 : 19. Where was this place ? How far did he design to go ? Rom. 15 : 28.
- V. 22. What is meant by "this word" ? Why did they give him audience no further ?
- V. 23. What did they then do ? Of what state of mind were these actions symbolical ? See 2 Sam. 16 : 13.
- V. 24. What did the chief captain then do ? What is meant by examined by scourging ? Was this to be compared in cruelty with the court of inquisition originated a few centuries ago in the Roman Catholic church ?
- V. 25. What were these "thongs" ? What did Paul say as he was being bound with them ? Why did they bind him ? Why was it not lawful to scourge a Roman uncondemned ?
- V. 26. Hearing Paul's question, what does the centurion at once do ?

- V. 27. In what perplexity does Lysias now find himself placed? What is his question and Paul's answer?
- V. 28. What is meant by "this freedom"? How do you suppose Paul "was free born"?
- V. 29. What became of Paul's accusers? Why is Lysias afraid?
- V. 30. What does he do on the morrow? Why had he kept Paul bound till then? Whom did Lysias at once summon together? Why? What is meant by "brought Paul down"?

Review Questions.—In reviewing this lesson, where do we see a most instructive sermon accomplishing nothing, because of envious and revengeful hearers? Does good fruit always visibly follow good preaching? Why is a man fanatically deluded the most terrible of all terrors? How far may a Christian value his civil rights? How far may he defend them? What makes citizenship in the kingdom of heaven better than mere earthly citizenship? What made the Jewish race reject Paul and Paul's Christianity? Who made Paul to differ from his race? Gal. 1:11.

Bigotry.—"Mr. T— sees religion, not as a *sphere*, but as a *line*, and it is the identical line in which *he* is moving. He is like an African buffalo, sees right forward, but nothing on the right hand or the left. He would not perceive a legion of angels or of devils at the distance of ten yards on the one side or the other."—*John Foster*.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men."

—MATT. 23:13.

Oct. 28.]

LESSON IV.

PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL.—Acts 23:1-11. A.D. 58 or 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 6-11.

1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Before the Council.—The apostle Paul, like the Redeemer himself (Matt. 26: 57, etc.) and like Peter and John (Acts 4, 5, etc.; 5: 27, etc.), was now brought before the Sanhedrin. He commenced the proceedings himself, for he had not been cited by the assembly, but had been placed before them by the chief captain Lysias. Ananias presided in the assembly as high priest—an office which he possessed rather by usurpation than by legitimate authority. He had been high priest A. D. 48-59, with one exception, when his cruelty and avarice had caused him to be sent to Rome for trial. See *Joseph. Ant.* 20, 6, 2; *Milman's Hist. of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 413. After two years he was sent back to Judea by the favor of Agrippa, and allowed to resume his authority. Paul was now in the presence of the council before which, when he was present, Stephen had been judged. That moment could hardly be forgotten by him, but he looked steadfastly at his inquisitors, among whom he would recognize many who had been his fellow-pupils in the school of Gamaliel and his associates in the persecution of the Christians. That unflinching look, however, of conscious integrity offended them, upon which Ananias commanded that he be struck over the mouth—a common punishment in the East for language which may displease those in power. Paul was vehemently indignant, and was rebuked for disrespect. He at once admitted that he had spoken in haste, the outrage was so great, and proceeded to avail himself of the religious differences of the Sanhedrin; for by resting his defence on his belief in the resurrection he would irritate the Sadducees, but gain the Pharisees on his side. An angry discussion followed, requiring the interference of the Roman commander, who again withdrew Paul to the citadel. Here the apostle had a vision bringing him good cheer, with the added prediction of his testimony for the Lord, not

only in Jerusalem, but also in Rome; and so we are brought to a distant view of Paul's closing days.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Paul's conscious integrity, v. 1.	Mon. Acts 23 : 1-11.
II. Paul smitten on the mouth, vs. 2-5.	Tues. v. 1; Acts 4 : 5-22.
III. Dissension in the council, vs. 6-9.	Wed. v. 3; Matt. 23 : 27-39.
IV. Paul again in the castle, v. 10.	Thurs. v. 5; John 18 : 15-27.
V. Visited by the Lord, v. 11.	Fri. v. 8; Mark 12 : 18-27.
	Sat. v. 9; 1 Cor. 15 : 35-58.
	SUN. v. 11; Ps. 91.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **Men and brethren**, Paul does not here add *fathers*, feeling himself to be the equal of all before him; **I have lived in all good conscience**, having always acted conscientiously, not only in civil, but in all religious matters. A man on defence for his life has some right to personal considerations like these, provided he can in all sincerity, use them. Compare 24 : 16; 2 Cor. 1 : 12; 4 : 2; Heb. 13 : 18; 1 John 3 : 21. (2.) **commanded**—*i. e.*, not the council, but servants standing near; **to smite him on the mouth**, the mouth that talks of such integrity must be closed. (3.) **God shall smite thee**—*i. e.*, for this injustice, a declaration that was fulfilled at the beginning of the great Jewish war, when Ananias died by assassination (*Joseph. Bell. Jud.* 2, 17. 9); **thou whited wall**—*i. e.*, hypocrite (see Matt. 23 : 27); **contrary to law**, deciding the case before it is heard. (5.) **I wist not**, rather, "I did not know"—*i. e.*, at the moment I did not bear in mind. Paul seems to us to admit that he was thrown off his guard, as the best of men sometimes are; "the insult had touched him to the quick, and he had spoken rashly. But what can surpass the grace with which he recovered his self-possession, the frankness with which he acknowledged his error? If he had not acted as Christ did under a similar provocation (John 18 : 22, 23), certainly the manner in which he atoned for his fault was *Christ-like*."—*Hackett*. (6.) **perceived**, showing great tact, in a good sense. He had seen enough to satisfy him that the council was unprepared for calm deliberation; hence, not merely for worldly wisdom, but for the triumph of one truth at least that was allied to Pharisaical belief, though not to Sadducaic, he was willing to divide the assembly. "Paul is as wise as a

serpent (Matt. 10 : 16), though he does not renounce the harmlessness of the dove." (7.) **for the Sadducees say.** See Matt. 3 : 7 ; Mark 12 : 18 ; *Bell. Jud.* 2, 8. 4 ; *Ant.* 18, 1. 4. (9.) **let us not fight**, the best manuscripts omit this last clause, a significant gesture or look to the Sadducees being enough to express what is unsaid. (11.) **be of good cheer**, Paul had not shown signs of discouragement, but his faith was yet to suffer other great trials ; hence the timeliness of this divine assurance. It also meets his heart's desire as a strengthening promise that he shall extend his testimony for Christ to Rome. Rom. 1 : 9-16.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul before the Council.—Who had been brought before the Sanhedrin before Paul ? Why did Paul commence the proceedings himself ? Who presided over the assembly ? When Paul formerly was present in the council, what martyr had been tried and condemned ? Whom would he now be apt to recognize in the council ? In what service had he once acted under the authority of this council ? Did he not think he was right in doing so ? Acts 26 : 9 ; 1 Tim. 1 : 13.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Why does not Paul add "fathers" to "men and brethren" ? What does he boldly assert ? Does not Paul often allude to his habitual conscientiousness of life ? See *Explanations*, v. 11.
- V. 2. When Ananias, expecting that Paul would quail before him, found Paul in exactly the opposite spirit, what did he do ?
- V. 3. What law did this command of the high priest violate ? Deut. 1 : 16 ; Lev. 19 : 15. What does Paul immediately predict ? When was this prediction fulfilled ? What is meant by whited wall ? How did it apply to Ananias ?
- V. 4. How did the bystanders remonstrate with Paul ?
- V. 5. What is Paul's reply ? What do you understand by it ? What does Dr. Hackett say of it ? When we make mistakes, what should we at once do ? Cite examples. John 13 : 8, 9. Is the Bible any the less worthy of confidence because its chief characters are shown to be human ?
- V. 6. Paul has tried *calm* methods in vain ; why does he now try *decisive* methods ? How does he show that he is a Pharisee, and therefore an *orthodox* Jew ? In pleading for the resurrection, does he not plead for Christianity ?
- V. 7. A party spirit is at once aroused in the council ; how did this appear ?
- V. 8. In what did the Sadducees not believe ? What is a *materialist* of the present day ? Ans. *One who main-*

tains that the soul is only matter in high organization.
Why could you not be a materialist? Eccl. 12 : 7 ; Matt. 10 : 28 ; Luke 23 : 43 ; Phil. 1 : 21-24.

- V. 9. What kind of a controversy now takes place? Instead of saying, "If Jesus has risen, let us hear him," what do the Pharisees say? What state of heart does this omission indicate?
- V. 10. The Roman commandant fears serious trouble; what precaution does he take to prevent it?
- V. 11. How is Paul now encouraged? Of what is he informed?

Review Questions.—Where in this lesson have we seen a good conscience? Where illegal injustice? Where a hasty speech? Where the prompt spirit of amendment? Where the wisdom of a serpent? Where Satan's kingdom divided against itself? Where the Lord with his servants? Where a prophecy of things to come? What two things entered into Paul's defence? See Golden Text. Where have we left Paul?

On Mistakes.—Said an upright farmer, "God has permitted me but one journey through this world; and when I am gone, I cannot return to rectify mistakes." *Moral.*—Be always prompt in righting wrong (see vs. 3-5).

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."—ACTS 6 : 10.

Nov. 4.]

LESSON V.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.—Acts 24 : 10-25. A. D. 59.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 22-25.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which

they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Progress of Events.—The day after Lysias had taken Paul into the castle certain of the Jews banded together to assassinate Paul; but the conspiracy was detected, and he was sent to Cæsarea, to Felix the governor, under a strong Roman guard. Paul's enemies had resolved that his career should end in Jerusalem, but God directed his course to the goal he had so much desired—namely, Rome. Lysias had been in doubt, but his letter to Felix shows that he was now convinced of Paul's innocence of any civil wrong. The Roman soldiers, who took Paul away by night, left him in the morning safely at Antipatris, forty-two miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cæsarea. Leaving him beyond all danger of an ambush, the Roman soldiers returned to Jerusalem, and the cavalry alone brought him the same day to Cæsarea. With the letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix the relation of the apostle with this honorable Roman soldier ends. Paul comes now into the custody of a very different character. *Antonius Felix* was a brother of *Pallas*, a favorite of Nero. He had been governor (procurator) of Judea about six years. His government was vigorous; but as Tacitus says, "he used the power of a king with the disposition of a slave through every kind of cruelty and licentiousness." Finding Paul to be of Cilicia, he promised him a hearing as soon as his accusers should arrive. Meanwhile, he ordered the prisoner to be kept, chained probably to a soldier, in the government house, which had been the palace of

Herod the Great, and had now become the governor's official residence. Henceforth Paul is in Roman custody to the end of the period embraced in the Acts. It proved to be a protection to him against the animosity of the Jews. Five days after Paul's arrival at Cæsarea, and just twelve since he had reached Jerusalem, Ananias and the elders came down to Cæsarea with a certain Latin orator named Tertullus, between whose fulsome harangue before Felix as an hired advocate and the manly simplicity of Paul's defence there is scarcely a more striking contrast to be found in oratory.—*Smith's N. T. Hist.*, p. 465. On all these events read carefully ch. 23 : 12-35 ; 24 : 1-9. Our lesson brings us to Paul's address and hearing before Felix and his illegal wife Drusilla. It is the bad man's and bad woman's chance! Paul has come their way by God's sending.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. After Tertullus, Paul speaks, vs. 10-21.	<i>Mon.</i> Acts 23 : 12-35.
II. Decision of Felix delayed, vs. 22, 23.	<i>Tues.</i> Acts 24 : 1-27.
III. Paul before Felix and Drusilla, vs. 24, 25.	<i>Wed.</i> Ps. 1.
	<i>Thurs.</i> Rom. 12.
	<i>Fri.</i> v. 17 ; 2 Cor. 8 : 1-24.
	<i>Sat.</i> 1 Pet. 4 : 12-19.
	<i>SUN.</i> v. 24, 25 ; Matt. 14 : 1-12.

EXPLANATIONS.—(10.) **then Paul**, by a simple narrative Paul overthrows Tertullus' exaggerated charge; **many years a judge**, Felix had governed Samaria under *Cumanus*, and had since been governor of Judea about six years, which was longer than the average. (11.) **but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem**, as, for instance, he meets the elders first day; joins the Nazarites second day; on the fifth day after this he is seized, making it the sixth day; appears before the Sanhedrin the seventh day, is sent to Cæsarea the eighth day; and makes his defence on the fifth after leaving Jerusalem, the twelfth day.—*Anno. Bible.* (12.) **neither found me in the temple**, a denial of the charge of Tertullus in v. 6; **neither raising up the people**—*i. e.*, though gathered in crowds, Paul did not incite the crowds. (13.) **now**—*i. e.*, for the first time. (14.) **which they call heresy**, a voluntary and full confession of *faith* in v. 14, of *hope* in v. 15, and of *love* in v. 17. The word "*heresy*" is rather a "*sect*." "What they call a '*sect*' is really the proper '*way*' of carrying out the religion of my fathers." See v. 5. "Paul confutes the prejudice as to the *newness* of Christianity."—*Bengel.* **in the law**, here Paul refutes Tertullus

again. (15.) **have hope toward God** (ch. 23 : 6 ; 26 : 6, 7) ; **also allow**, rather, "entertain;" **of the just and unjust**, "the resurrection of the wicked in order to be punished is as clearly taught here as that of the righteous to be rewarded."—*Hackett*. Annihilationism has no support here. (16.) **herein**—*i. e.*, therefore having anticipation of such a day. With such a hope it is impossible for me to be guilty of the crimes alleged against me. See 1 Tim. 3 : 9 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 16. (17.) **to bring alms**, this book records no more respecting these alms, but Paul's Epistles written just before his journey from Greece and Asia Minor contain frequent allusions to them (Rom. 15 : 25, 26, 31 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 1-4 ; 2 Cor. 8 : 1-4, etc. ; Gal. 2 : 10) ; **offerings**, his own to the Pentecost, according to law. (18.) **whereupon**, rather, "in which" actions I was met with, not by these persons who now appear as my accusers, but by foreign Jews ; **found me purified**, or consecrated as a Nazarite. (19.) **who ought**—*i. e.*, these foreign Jews from Asia. (22.) **he deferred them**, being unwilling to displease the Jews, and ready to receive a bribe from the friends of Paul. See v. 26. He adopted the suggestion of Tertullus in v. 8, though he knew very well the nature of the trial going on. (23.) **a centurion**, rather, the centurion already put in charge of Paul ; **liberty**, as much as safe custody would allow. See next clause. (24.) **his wife Drusilla**, daughter of Herod Agrippa (ch. 12), the wife of *Azizus*, king of *Emesa*, but persuaded to desert her husband and to marry Felix. As a Jewess she would be naturally curious to hear the famous Christian preacher. (25.) **righteousness**, or justice, which Felix had outraged ; **temperance**, or self-control, especially chastity ; **judgment to come**, sure to settle all accounts. These three things Paul teaches Felix and Drusilla to heed for this great reason :

"The Judge is at the gate—
 The Judge that comes in mercy,
 The Judge that comes with might,
 To terminate the evil,
 To diadem the right."—*Bernard*.

QUESTIONS.

On the Progress of Events.—What did certain Jews band together to do after Lysias took Paul back into the castle? How was the plot detected? What disposition did Lysias then make of Paul? How far was Antipatris from Jerusalem? How far was Cæsarea? What word did Lysias send to

Felix concerning Paul? How long after reaching Cæsarea did Paul wait for his Jewish accusers to come down? Who came as their advocate? How did Tertullus' speech compare with Paul's? Of what did he accuse Paul?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 10. What does Paul mean by speaking of Felix as a judge? How long had he been governor of Judea? What did Tacitus say of his character? See Note.
- V. 11. How had these twelve days been passed? See 21 : 15, 18, 21, 26, 27; 22 : 29, 30; 23 : 10. For what had Paul gone up to Jerusalem? How can this be *reconciled* with v. 17? Comp. 20 : 17. Is there not worship in alms-giving?
- V. 12. What does Paul in this verse deny?
- V. 13. What does he say his enemies could not prove?
- V. 14. What, however, does Paul frankly confess? What way is referred to possibly? v. 5. What is meant here by heresy? Why does he call the God of Christianity the God of his fathers? Comp. 2 Tim. 1 : 3.
- V. 15. Of what had Paul hope? Why is this hope found so little in the experience of God's people to-day? What did the Jews allow? Why does Paul introduce this? ch. 23 : 6, 7.
- V. 16. What is meant by "I exercise myself"? What is meant by conscience? Is it often seen nowadays? How may an unoffending conscience be secured?
- V. 17. What is alms-giving? Where does Paul speak at length about his relation to this benevolence?
- V. 18. Who found Paul in the temple? In what state did they find him? What does Paul mean by this? ch. 21 : 23-26.
- V. 20. What does Paul now demand? When was Paul before the council? ch. 23 : 1-10.
- V. 22. What does Felix now decide? Why wait for Lysias? What did he expect? v. 26. What is meaner than taking a bribe? Are there any bribes nowadays?
- V. 25. Who was Drusilla? What does Paul now preach about?

Review Questions.—Where in Paul's address do we see simplicity? How does he prove that he has not been seditious? What two points of Tertullus does he deny? What teaching does he admit? What benevolence urged him in part to Jerusalem? What three great points were in his sermon before Felix and Drusilla? How did they apply to them? What is the Golden Text?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."—Acts 24 : 25.

Nov. 11.] LESSON VI.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.—Acts 26 : 6-20. A. D. 60 or 61.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 15-18.

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers :

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem : and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and *them* which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee :

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon. O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision :

20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Historical Connection.—Felix postponed further inquiry into Paul's case until Lysias came down. We read nothing, however, of his so coming, nor of any further judicial proceedings on the part of Felix. Thus, Paul remained in imprisonment, though treated with kindness and consideration, and the cruel suspense continued

two years (A. D. 59-61). All positive information is denied to us concerning the employment of the apostle while thus imprisoned. The kind of custody to which he was committed by Roman law was not the *public gaul* (*custodia publica*), the most severe of its kind, of which Paul and Silas had an experience in Philippi (16: 24), nor that known as *free custody*, employed in the case of men of high rank put in charge of a magistrate or senator, but that known as military custody (*custodia militaris*), where the accused person is put in charge of a soldier, chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldier's left. As we saw in our last lesson, Felix desired a bribe from Paul, but Paul would never evade the course of law by such dishonorable means. When the administration of Felix, however, became more and more unpopular, for which he was summoned to Rome, Festus came to take the command of the province. Felix had been coarse and cruel; Festus seems to be honorable and just. He would not accede to the request made to him when in Jerusalem by the Jews for Paul's surrender to the Sanhedrin for trial, their real purpose, doubtless, being to assassinate him in the road. See ch. 25: 16. The accused, Festus said, must have the accuser face to face, and that in Cæsarea. Having visited Jerusalem and returned, followed immediately by the accusers of Paul, Festus took his seat on the judicial tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. The Jews renewed their charge, classed under three heads as before, heresy, sacrilege, and treason (Acts 25: 8): (1) the law; (2) the temple; (3) against Cæsar. Festus himself is now in perplexity. Not wishing to lose the favor of the Jews, he proposed to Paul that he should go to Jerusalem, there to be tried in his presence or protection. But Paul saw what danger lurked in this proceeding; and knowing what rights he had, not as a Jew, but as a Roman citizen, he appealed unto Cæsar. By these potent words, "*I appeal unto Cæsar*," Paul transferred his case at once to the supreme tribunal of the emperor of Rome. The appeal was allowed; and still Festus saw how awkward the position was to send a prisoner up to Rome without any special charges of criminal action. About this time Herod Agrippa II., king of *Chalæis*, the northern district of Palestine, with his sister Berenice, came down on a complimentary visit to the new Roman governor of the province. They stayed "some days." Their visit gave to Festus an opportunity of consulting those who knew better than he the points in question between Paul and the Jews. Soon arrangements were made for the prisoner to speak before his royal visitors, already curious to hear him. The occasion came with great pomp and display. See *Howson*. Our lesson is a part of the speech to which we allude. It should be considered as a whole.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Paul's present belief, vs. 6-8.
- II. His past persecutions, vs. 9-11.
- III. His conversion, vs. 12-15.
- IV. His divine commission, vs. 16-18.
- V. His obedience to God's will, vs. 19, 20.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon.	Acts 24: 26, 27; ch. 25.
Tues.	Acts 26: 1-20.
Wed.	v. 6; Jer. 33: 14-26.
Thurs.	v. 8; Matt. 28: 1-15.
Fri.	v. 17; Eph. 3: 1-21.
Sat.	v. 18; Isa. 35.
Sun.	v. 20; 2 Chron. 33.

EXPLANATIONS.—Being accused about matters relating to the Jewish religion, Paul is glad to plead before one who, being himself a Jew, knew this religion so well. His speech, so far uttered, has covered his fidelity from his youth to the Jewish customs and traditions. See vs. 1-5. **(6.) And now,** a transition from his past to his present position; **of the promise**—*i. e.*, concerning the coming of the Messiah. See ch. 13 : 32, 33; Gen. 12 : 3; 22 : 18; 26 : 4; 28 : 14; 49 : 10; Deut. 18 : 15; 2 Sam. 7 : 12; Ps. 132 : 11; Isa. 9 : 6, 7; Jer. 23 : 5; 33 : 14-16; Ezek. 34 : 23; Dan. 9 : 24; Rom. 15 : 8. **(7.) instantly,** rather, "with earnestness;" **for which,** "concerning which." The apostle proceeds to say that this hope was accomplished in Jesus, the proof of which lies in God's raising him from the dead. **(8.) Why,** etc., not "*What,*" as Howson, but *Why is it judged incredible?* as Meyer, Hackett, and others. Paul claims that the Jewish nation had always believed that God would raise the dead; hence his question. At the same time, the Jews got up a report concerning Christ's resurrection that the disciples came by night and stole him away. Matt. 28 : 13. **(9.) I verily thought**—*i. e.*, "I indeed, therefore," siding precisely with the cruel views of his countrymen, and sincerely so. Still, sincerity is no test of truth. A man may be sincerely wrong. It was so with Paul; the persecutions in which he at first gloried "appeared afterward to him as the crime of his life." 1 Cor. 15 : 9. **(10.) the saints**—*i. e.*, the holy people. Paul did not use the phrase before the Sanhedrin, 22 : 4, etc. "But here, before Agrippa, where there was no such need of caution, the apostle indulges his own feelings by giving the persecuted Christians a title of honor, which aggravates his guilt;" **my voice,** not as a vote, but as an earnest supporter of the act. Paul was probably not old enough then to belong to the Sanhedrin. **(11.) compelled them to blaspheme,** urged them by threats of torture. Pliny says the heathen persecutors applied similar tests. It was an anticipation of the modern inquisitions. **(12.) Damascus,** east of Lebanon, 144 miles north-east from Jerusalem. On vs. 12-18, see ch. 9 : 3-6. **(17.) from the people**—*i. e.*, the Jews. **(18.) to open their eyes,** giving them enlightenment of soul, in order that they might turn from Satan unto God. See John 14 : 30; Eph. 2 : 2. **(20.) showed first,** see 9 : 19, 20; **at Jerusalem,** 9 : 28, 29.

QUESTIONS.

On Historical Connection.—How long was Paul imprisoned in Cæsarea? Felix professed to be desirous of seeing Lysias; was his desire gratified? What was his chief desire? ch. 23: 26. Into what kind of custody did Felix commit Paul? To whom was he chained? Felix became more and more unpopular as governor; who succeeded him? Who sent Festus to Judea? Ans. Nero. A.D. 60. What do the Jews request Festus to do? ch. 25: 2. What does he answer? 25: 4, 5. When the judicial proceedings against Paul are renewed, what does he say in defence? 25: 8. What does Festus now ask Paul? How does Paul receive it? To what is the trial now transferred? What desire of Paul (ch. 19: 21) and what promise of the Lord (23: 11) are thus to be fulfilled? What two distinguished persons now visit Cæsarea? What favorable opportunity does it afford Festus? How is Agrippa's curiosity awakened? 25: 22.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 6. Paul had already begun his address to his distinguished hearers; how does he express the idea that his faith was to be found in the Old Testament?
- V. 7. What does the resurrection of Jesus prove concerning the Messiah? How does Paul bring out the truth that the Jews of his time trampled on the teachings of the prophets?
- V. 8. How do the Jews treat the evidence of Christ's resurrection? Matt. 28: 13.
- V. 9. In what affair did Paul take sides at first with his people? Was he sincere? Why is sincerity no test of truth? Did not Paul obey his conscience? Would he not have done wrong if he had disobeyed his conscience? How, then, was his act culpable? How did he afterward regard it? 1 Cor. 15: 9.
- V. 10. What shows that Stephen was not the only martyr in the first persecution?
- V. 12. There are several things stated in this description of Paul's conversion (vs. 12-18) not stated in ch. 9: 3-16; what are some of them? Is there any contradiction between the two passages? Why does he call Christians "saints"? Are all professed Christians "saints" in fact? See 2 Cor. 6: 17.
- V. 15. What proof does Paul have of Christ's resurrection?
- V. 16. How does he state his commission as an apostle?
- V. 17. What special promise does he receive?
- V. 18. What does he say are the sublime aims of his ministry?
- V. 19. What evidence does Paul give that his conversion was genuine? What is "conversion"? How is it distinguished from "regeneration"? Which precedes the other? (P. S.—Ask your pastor.)
- V. 20. Where does Paul say he first preached? What does he say he preached? Where these doctrines are not her-

alded, can it be said that their apostolic preaching is enjoyed?

Review Questions.—Who in this lesson have been Paul's hearers? Where in this lesson have we seen his thorough knowledge of Old Testament history? What is the one Old Testament promise? How is the Old Testament hope answered in the resurrection of Christ? As Paul looks at his record prior to his conversion what does he see? Since his conversion what does he claim to have done? What works are "meet for repentance"?

Repentance.—There is built for every penitent and believing sinner a highway of forgiveness and salvation from the depths of degradation and sin clear up to the Father's house.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—Acts 26 : 19.

Nov. 18.]

LESSON VII.

ALMOST PERSUADED.—Acts 26 : 21-29. A. D. 61.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 24-29.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believed thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

The Herodian Family.—It is well to know who the Herod Agrippa II. we are studying about in this lesson was. This will bring us back to the Herodian family—a family that presents one side of the last developments of the Jewish nation. The evils which had existed in the Jewish priesthood after the return from captivity found an unexpected embodiment in the tyranny of a foreign usurper. Religion was adopted as a policy. A temporal dynasty was established right by the side of the spirituality of Judaism. This dynasty was founded by a descendant of Esau. The Herods were Idumeans in ancestry; but though aliens in race, they had been brought over to Judaism by John Hyrcanus (B. C. 130). The general policy of the Herodian family was to found a great and independent kingdom, in which the power of Judaism should subserve to the consolidation of a state. It sought the protection of Rome, but aimed at independent empire in the East. The members of the Herodian family who are mentioned in the Gospels and in the Acts are: I. *Herod the Great*, son of Antipater, procurator of Judea by Julius Cæsar (B. C. 47). His reign was marked by terrible bloodshed in his own family. He caused the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem. Matt. 2: 16-18. II. *Herod Antipas*, son of Herod the Great. He beheaded John the Baptist. Matt. 14: 4, etc. To him, when celebrating the passover at Jerusalem, Pilate sent Jesus for examination. Luke 23: 6, etc. He was capricious, despotic, sensual, superstitious. III. *Archelaus*, like Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. The kingdom designed for Antipas was left to him. Hence, Joseph's retreat from Egypt to Galilee. Matt. 2: 22. IV. *Herod Agrippa I.*, a grandson of Herod the Great. He was brought up at Rome. He put to death James and imprisoned Peter. Acts 12: 1, etc. In A. D. 44, after being saluted as a god, he was carried from the theatre in Cæsarea to his palace, and died, after five days of suffering, in great agony. V. *Herod Agrippa II.*, a son of Herod Agrippa I. About A. D. 50 the emperor Claudius gave him the kingdom of Chalcis, in Northern Palestine. He built costly buildings at Beirut and Jerusalem. His relation to Berenice, his sister, was the cause of grave suspicion. After the fall of Jerusalem he retired with Berenice to Rome, where he died in the third year of Trajan (A. D. 100), being the last prince of the house of Herod. This was the man who was permitted to hear the impassioned words of the apostle, and who was cold enough in temper to take part afterward in the destruction of his nation.—See "Herod," Smith's *Dict.*

ANALYSIS.

- I. Murderous Jewish designs, v. 21.
- II. Paul's continuous fidelity, vs. 22, 23.
- III. Accused of madness, v. 24.
- IV. Paul not mad, but sober, vs. 25-27.
- V. Agrippa disposed to jest, vs. 28, 29.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	Acts 26: 21-32.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 23; Luke 24: 13-53.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 25; James 1: 16-27.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 27; Matt. 2: 16-23.
<i>Fri.</i>	v. 27; Luke 23: 6-25.
<i>Sat.</i>	v. 27; Acts 12.
<i>Sun.</i>	v. 28; Luke 13: 22-35.

EXPLANATIONS.—(21.) **for these causes**, see vs. 19, 20; not for any violation of civil or religious Jewish law; **the Jews . . . went about**. See ch. 21:30, 31. (22.) **witnessing**. See ch. 20:20-27. (23.) **that Christ should suffer**. See Luke 24:26, 27, 46. (24.) **thou art beside thyself**, rather, "thou art mad." The defence made to Agrippa as a Jew, the strangeness of its topics, and the warmth of the speaker easily made Festus think that Paul was insane, and his appeals to the ancient Scriptures suggested a cause for this insanity. "It is reasonable," says Howson, "to believe that in his imprisonment such 'books and parchments' as he afterward wrote for in his second letter to Timothy were brought to him by his friends." 2 Tim. 4:12. Paul was judged to be a mad enthusiast, whose head had been turned by poring over strange learning. Paul's reply was courteous and self-possessed, but intensely earnest. See next verses. (26.) **for the king knoweth**, with great tact and courtesy Paul reminds Festus that his royal guest firmly believed what he (Festus) thought irrational, who was also cognizant of all the facts alleged; **in a corner**, not in an obscure place, but in the metropolis of Judea and at a great public festival. (28.) **then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost**, literally, "in a little"—*i. e.*, *at this rate*; not "*almost*," as in our version, and as in the theme of the lesson to-day. The current interpretation of this passage is hardly allowable. Still, Agrippa may not have been altogether easy at heart while speaking in jest. He does not, however, say that he is almost persuaded, but, lightly, that *at this rate* he should be. (29.) **I would to God**, rather, "I could pray to God." It is the impulse of my heart that you might become a Christian *in a short time*, as you say; but if not in a short time, *in a long time*. I could rejoice in such an event, whether it were sooner or later.—*Huckett*; **except these bonds**—*i. e.*, chains hanging still upon his arms as he made his defence. This concluded the interview. Paul's last words were "a noble peroration of this great discourse, and an appropriate winding up of the whole series of apologies which occupies the history of his last visit to the Holy Land."—*Alexander*.

QUESTIONS.

On the Herodian Family.—What picture in history does the Herodian family present? Who were the ancestors of this family? By whom were the Idumeans conquered? Did they

accept Judaism then? The Herods were foreign usurpers, believing in Judaism; to what did they make Judaism from policy subservient? A Jewish polity as an aid to their state was their aim in the East; whose protection did they seek? Who was Herod the Great, and of what cruelties was he guilty? Who was the Herod that beheaded John the Baptist and that examined Jesus by Pilate's request? Who was the Herod that put to death James and imprisoned Peter? What was his end? Who was the Herod now on a visit to Festus? When and where did he die? In what destruction did he coldly take part? Were there any more King Herods after him?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 21. What were some of Paul's offences in the eyes of the Jews? Where had he violated the Jewish law? Where the Jewish temple? Where the laws of Rome? What will arouse worse passions than ignorant prejudice?
- V. 22. How is Paul's safety up to this time to be accounted for? Does "small and great" refer to age or to rank? How does Paul in his preaching differ from those who make light of the cross of Christ? 1 Cor. 2:2. Is preaching *morality* preaching the gospel?

"They struggle vainly to preserve a part
Who have not courage to contend for all."—*Italian Poet.*

- V. 24. How did Festus interrupt Paul? Was not Festus serious in making this charge? On what seemingly sufficient reason did he base it? May not Paul have been a great student during his imprisonment?
- V. 25. Does Paul take offence at the charge of Festus? How does he show his self-possession? Better than what is ruling one's spirit? Prov. 16:32. How does Paul show his civility? How that he is not impracticable?
- V. 26. How does he still further show great tact and courtesy? What facts does he say are notorious? To whose conscience does he then appeal?
- V. 28. What does Agrippa now say? How far is he serious, if at all, in these words?
- V. 29. Paul acts on the basis of Agrippa's sincerity; what is Paul's earnest wish? What is meant by bonds? What is Agrippa's decision? vs. 30-32.

Suggested Questions.—Why do zeal and success as a Christian preacher awaken deadly hatred on the part of the world? v. 21. Where does the gospel have its vitalizing centre? Was Confucianism or Buddhism or Mohammedanism ever designed, like Christianity, to be of universal applicability? v. 23. *Who is beside himself, Paul or Festus? The Christian or he who is not a Christian?* If a man is offended, need he offend in return? What is the difference between a dead and a living faith? v. 25. May not a man hear true gospel preaching and still be lost? Did Felix (24:25) or Agrippa (26:28) ever become a Christian?

Model of Christian Courtesy.—Doddridge, writing upon

v. 25, says, "If great and good men who meet with rude and insolent treatment in the defence of the gospel would learn to behave with Paul's moderation, it would be a great accession to the Christian cause."

A Way to Hell from the Gate of Heaven.—Writing about Ignorance rejected at the gate of heaven, Bunyan adds, "Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gate of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke; and behold, it was a dream."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—Acts 26 : 28.

Nov. 25.] LESSON VIII.

PAUL IN THE STORM.—Acts 27 : 14-26. A. D. Sept. 61.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 21-26.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat :

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after a long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

Paul on his Voyage to Rome.—Having appealed to Cæsar, Paul is sent to Rome. It was an answer to his long and earnestly-cherished wishes (Rom. 15: 23), and emphatically foretold by divine revelation. Acts 19: 21; 23: 11; 27: 24. In so doing, as Milman says, Paul “left, probably for ever, the land of his forefathers—that land beyond all others inhospitable to the religion of Christ.” He had escaped the hostility of the Sanhedrin and was now entrusted to the care of Julius, a noble centurion of the Augustine cohort. His ship belonged to *Adramyttium*, a city on the north-western coast of Asia Minor. His companions were other state prisoners and his friends Luke and Aristarchus, from Thessalonica, mentioned before. See 19: 29; 20: 4. His first course was to Sidon; here he had liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself and obtain help for his wants on the voyage. Thence he sailed under Cyprus—that is, *under the lee* of Cyprus. The direct course would have been south of this island, but the prevailing west wind compelled them to go north of it. He came next to *Myra*, in Lycia, a district of Pamphylia. Here his *Adramyttium* ship came to anchor, or went farther on her homeward way up the *Ægean*. Paul was now transferred to a larger ship from Alexandria bound for Italy, built not for coasting-trade so much as for the open sea. This ship sailed west with difficulty, taking several days, owing to the west wind, to sail one hundred and thirty geographical miles from Myra to *Cnidus*, a large sea-port on a projecting peninsula on the coast between Cos and Rhodes, at the very entrance to the *Ægean* Sea. Then, being prevented from sailing farther westward (27: 7), this merchant-vessel from Alexandria struck south-eastwardly and sailed under *Crete*, over against *Salmone*, on its eastern promontory; thence under the lee of its southern coast to *Fair Havens*, a place midway on the island, on its southern coast. Here they were sheltered by Cape Matala, lying a little to the west, from the full force of the west wind and sea. The month was now October, the season of the fast or festival of atonement, regarded as too late in the year to be safe for a long voyage. Paul admonished Julius the centurion of the danger, but he took counsel rather from the master or the pilot of the vessel, who, not liking Fair Havens as a place “to winter in,” owing to its exposure to southerly winds, favored Phenice, a town to the west of Fair Havens, easily reached in good weather in a few hours. When the south wind blew softly, they supposed that all was ready for a quick sail to Phenice. It was only forty miles away. But instead of making this port on the island of Crete, they were turned from their course by a north-east storm; and being driven before the wind, they gave up further endeavor to work to windward, and were borne along to the south-west to the little island of *Clauia*, running under the lee of its southern shore. (Our lesson confines us chiefly to the Levanter, the vessel now encountered, and to some of the means that were employed to control the vessel in the storm. Let all, by Maps, familiarize themselves with the places touched or passed by Paul on his voyage thus far.)

ANALYSIS.

I. The storm at sea, vs. 14-20.

II. Paul's prediction, vs. 21-26.

DAILY READINGS.

Mon. Acts 27 : 1-26.

Tues. v. 1 ; Matt. 8 : 5-12.

Wed. v. 14 ; Ps. 107 : 23-43.

Thurs. v. 24 ; Gen. 18 : 16-33.

Fri. Job 57.

Sat. Job 38.

Sun. Ps. 46.

EXPLANATIONS.—(14.) **arose against it**—*i. e.*, the ship after leaving *Fair Havens*, or came rushing down from the island. In that part of the Mediterranean a southerly breeze is often followed by a violent hurricane from the north-east, now called a *Levanter*; **called Euroclydon**, rather, "*Euro-aquilo*," a north-east wind. (15.) **was caught**, endeavoring to sail north-westerly; **we let her drive**, or drift before the wind, thereby sailing south-westerly. (16.) **and running under**—*i. e.*, under the lee of *Clauda* (the modern *Gonzo*), twenty-three miles to the south-west, though almost due south from *Phenice*, in *Crete*. The vessel, however, had probably not sailed as far west as *Phenice* when met by these opposite currents of air; **had much work to come by the boat**—*i. e.*, to hoist up and secure the boat, towed until now. (17.) **used helps**, common to ancient sailing, but resorted to rarely in modern times; **undergirding the ship**, by passing strong cables several times round the hull, so as to tighten it by external pressure; **into the quicksands**, rather, into the *Syrtis Major*, a large sandy gulf, greatly dreaded by seamen, on the north coast of *Africa*, near *Cyrene*; **strake sail**—*i. e.*, "lowered the gear," possibly the heavy main yard with the sail attached to it, yet not wholly, for with no sail the course would have been exactly south to the African quicksands; **and so were driven**, with just enough sail to make her course a little north of west. (18.) **lightened the ship**, by throwing out part of the cargo. (19.) **the tackling**, baggage, furniture, and possibly heavy rigging. Luke doubtless had a hand in this work; hence he says "*we*." (20.) **when neither sun nor stars**, having neither compass nor chart, they depended on the visible heavenly bodies for safe navigation; **in many days appeared**, including the three

days already indicated (v. 19); and how many of the eleven which followed (v. 27) before the final disaster is uncertain. (21.) **abstinence**—*i. e.*, from food, not from need (v. 36) so much as from responsibility and fear; **unto me**, not as your master, but as offering good counsel, entitling the word I am about to predict to your confidence; **have gained**, rather, "escaped." (22.) **no loss of life . . . but of the ship**. See v. 44. (23.) **stood by me** (see 23 : 11 ; Heb. 1 : 14); **before Cæsar**. See 23 : 11. (24.) **hath given thee**, in answer to thy prayer. Gen. 19 : 21, 29. (26.) **howbeit we must**, this is no guesswork, but real prophecy. See 28 : 1.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul on his Voyage to Rome.—The time has come for Paul to be taken to Rome, to whose imperial court he had appealed; in what ship does he embark at Cæsarea? In whose military charge is he put? Our New Testament studies have brought us into connection with several officers of the Roman army; name some of them, and the favorable impressions they have produced. Matt. 8 : 10 ; Luke 7 : 9 · Mark 15 : 39 ; Luke 23 : 47 ; Acts 10 : 1-48 ; 11 : 1-18 ; 27 : 3. Who were Paul's companions on this voyage? Did Paul ever return to the land of his forefathers? Will you now trace the voyage of Paul step by step to the scene of the present lesson? Where was the vessel when Paul advised no further sailing for the present? Where did the centurion propose to put the vessel in for winter? What season of the year was it? Why was it a dangerous season for sailing?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 14. How were the hopes of the officers of the vessel now blasted? They wanted to sail by the south wind to Phenice, on the island of Crete; what wind now strikes them? What is the meaning of "Euroclydon"?
Ans. *A north-east wind.*
- V. 15. When unable to bear up against this wind, what are they forced to do?
- V. 16. In what direction do they drift? How many miles is this small island to the south-west? What is meant by "much work to come by the boat"?
- V. 17. Describe the use and process of undergirding. What quicksands are especially feared? If they had taken all sail in, whither would they have gone? How much sail did they need to have on?
- V. 18. How was the ship lightened?
- V. 19. What was this "tackling" cast out on the third day? Who had a hand in casting it out?
- V. 20. Did ancient sailors ever risk their vessels in bad weather far from land? Was the compass then in use by the Romans? Did they have nautical charts? Upon

what were they wholly dependent for safe navigation?

- V. 21. By what was this "much abstinence" occasioned? Of what does Paul remind the fainting officers, passengers, and crew? Does he do it to gain credit for himself, or to gain confidence in what he is about to say?
- V. 22. What is his word of cheer? What his prophecy?
- V. 23. How has he been made aware of all this? What noble confession does he make?
- V. 24. What does the angel say is Paul's destination? How many lives did God give in answer, probably, to Paul's prayer? v. 37. Is not prayer, then, profitable?
- V. 26. What other prophecy does Paul now utter? What is the Golden Text?

To Superintendents.—As a final exercise, trace Paul's voyage thus far on the Map, being careful to mark the course of the voyage in the storm about which we have studied.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."—Ps. 56 : 3.

Dec. 2.]

LESSON IX.

THE DELIVERANCE.—Acts 27 : 33-44. A. D. Oct. 61.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 33-37.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground: and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose: and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

The Storm still Raging.—The storm does not cease. The vessel still drifts in Adria, that natural division of the Mediterranean which Humboldt names the *Syracusan* basin, and which had the coasts of Sicily, Italy, Greece, and Africa for its boundaries. It is the fourteenth night after leaving Crete; but some of those indications that a sailor's ear detects so quickly—the roar of breakers and the like—give warning of land near, which the soundings confirm. Fearing to be driven on the rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and “longed for day.” Here it is to be remembered that both ends of those ancient ships were alike. “Suppose a full-built merchant-ship of the present day cut in two, and the stern half replaced by one exactly the same as that of the bow, and we shall have a pretty accurate notion of what these ships were.”—*Smith*, p. 141. The most powerful anchor of all that was carried—“the last hope,” as it was called—was thrown last. See Heb. 6:19. To anchor by the stern was common with the ancients, and was regarded as the best means for checking the course of the ship, and for preventing her from swinging round upon the rocks. The bay of Malta was regarded as good holding-ground, so long as the cables remained firm. Lord Nelson anchored his fleet by the stern at the Nile and at Copenhagen. After the latter battle he said he read the *twenty-seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles*. The sailors were now getting desperate. They conspired to desert the ship by letting down the boat, on the pretence of letting more anchors out of the bow. But Paul interposed with words that furnish a marked illustration of the working of human effort with divine decrees. “*Except these abide in the ship,*” said Paul to Julius, “*ye cannot be saved.*” Then the soldiers cut the ropes by which the sailors were lowering the boat, and the last visible means of safety was swept away into the darkness.—See *Smith's N. T. Hist.*, p. 483. The willingness of the soldiers, however, to sacrifice this boat shows what wonderful ascendancy Paul had gained over his companions. The *best* are the *bravest*.

ANALYSIS.

- I. The morning meal, vs. 33-37.
- II. Casting out the cargo, v. 38.
- III. Making toward shore, vs. 39, 40.
- IV. The ship run aground, v. 41.
- V. Contrary counsel, vs. 42, 43.
- VI. All safe to land, v. 44.

DAILY READINGS.

<i>Mon.</i>	Acts 27 : 27-44.
<i>Tues.</i>	v. 27 ; Mark 4 : 35-41.
<i>Wed.</i>	v. 31 ; Matt. 25 : 32-46.
<i>Thurs.</i>	v. 35 ; 1 Tim. 4.
<i>Fri.</i>	Jon. 1 : 2.
<i>Sat.</i>	Gen. 8.
<i>SUN.</i>	2 Cor. 11 : 16-29.

EXPLANATIONS.—All were now shut up to the unknown methods of escape predicted by Paul. (33.) **meat**, as elsewhere, "food;" **having taken nothing**, though with food on board, still, from fear and hard labor, taking no regular meals nor adequate nourishment. (34.) **not a hair of your head**, a proverbial expression. 1 Kings 1 : 52 ; Matt. 10 : 30 ; Luke 21 : 18. (35.) **gave thanks**. See Matt. 15 : 36 ; Mark 8 : 6 ; John 6 : 11 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 30, 31 ; 1 Tim. 4 : 3, 4. (37.) **we were in all**, two hundred and seventy-six souls. Egyptian corn-ships sometimes carried twice as many passengers as were in this vessel.—*Josephus' Life*, sec. 3. (38.) **cast out the wheat**, possibly the rest of the provisions, but more likely the rest of the cargo.—*Anno. Bible*. (39.) **a certain creek with a shore**—i. e., with a beach or sandy shore. "The bay so justly known as St. Paul's is at the north-west extremity of the island of Malta (Melita), and is formed by the main shore on the south and the island of Salmonetta on the north. It extends from east to west, two miles long and one broad at the entrance, and at the inner end is nearly landlocked on three sides. The wind must have forced them to the west side of the bay, which is rocky, but has two creeks. One of these has a shore, the other no longer a sandy beach, but must have had one formerly."—*Hackett*. (40.) **taken up**, rather, "cut away;" **loosed the rudder bands**, "the paddle rudders, one on each side of the ship, like long oars, had doubtless been hoisted up and lashed, lest they should foul the anchors."—*Howson*. (41.) **where two seas meet**, "on account of the communication which the channel running between *Malta* and *Salmonetta* forms between the sea in the interior of the bay and the sea outside;" **the forepart stuck fast**, in a deposit of tenacious clay. (42.) **was to kill**, a sad design of soldierly cruelty. (43.) **but the**

centurion, and God through him. (44.) **all safe to land**, this was not Paul's first escape from shipwreck. See 2 Cor. 11 : 25, written long before this time.

QUESTIONS.

On the Storm still Raging.—What is meant by the vessel "driven up and down in Adria"? How was land detected by the sailors? By what were their senses confirmed? How much was a fathom to them? Ans. *About six feet.* Why did they cast out four anchors? Why from the stern? How were these sailors seen to be deceitful? How selfish? How was their plan thwarted? Do not God's promises (v. 22) usually presuppose the use of means? What do the soldiers now do? What does this show respecting their opinion of Paul?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 33. To what were all now shut up? Why does Paul advise all to take food? Do you suppose they had eaten literally nothing for fourteen days?
- V. 35. Before eating what does Paul do? What other examples of giving thanks at meals do the Scriptures afford us? See *Explanations* on v. 35.
- V. 37. How many were there in all the ship's company?
- V. 38. What further means of escape do they use? Where is divine sovereignty asserted in this chapter? vs. 22, 23, 26, 34. Where is *human agency* relied upon? vs. 31, 34, 38, 40, 41. Where do we see divine sovereignty and man's free agency asserted in single verses of the Bible? Matt. 26 : 24; Phil. 2 : 12.
- V. 39. What inlet with a shore convenient for landing did they find? What did they at once resolve to do?
- V. 40. By what means did they try to accomplish this?
- V. 41. Into what place did they fall? How was this place of two seas formed? What now happened to the vessel?
- V. 42. What cruel advice do the soldiers now give?
- V. 43. Who replies as a philanthropist? How do the prisoners again owe their lives to Paul? If the men who could swim had not swum ashore, would they have been saved according to God's promise? vs. 22, 34.
- V. 44. Was this Paul's first shipwreck? 2 Cor. 11 : 25.

Suggested Questions.—How does Paul differ from Jonah in his voyage on the sea? What is the spiritual anchor of the Christian? What pilot may fear who carries Christ and his salvation? What made Julius so kind to Paul? How was the sea an exalted scene of God's holy acts to Noah? How to Israel? Where have we seen Paul's prudence in this voyage? Where his faith? Where his love? Where his calmness? Where his firmness? Where his grateful use of means? Will you give a rapid review of the voyage of Paul thus far?

A CHRISTIAN MARINER'S HYMN.

"The land is near,
Well known to all,
Toward which we steer the ship."—*Chytraeus.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He bringeth them unto their desired haven."—Ps. 107 : 30.

Dec. 9.] LESSON X.

PAUL IN MELITA.—Acts 28 : 1-10. A. D. Nov. to Feb. 61, 62.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 1-6.

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves. No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honored us with many honors, and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

The Apostle at Melita.—We are now with the shipwrecked mariners on firm land, after a dangerous but most interesting voyage. It is in cold weather. Mr. Lewin calculates that the date is about the first of November. At the time of the shipwreck we studied about in our last lesson, Melita was a thinly-peopled island, but from its position in the Mediterranean it has always been important both in commerce and in war. Its population has greatly increased in modern times. It was at the time of

our study a dependency of Sicily belonging to Rome. Its language was Carthaginian or Punician. The island had a brilliant history under the Knights of St. John. The French and English at the close of the last century had an exciting struggle relating to its ownership. "No island," says Smith, "so small has so great a history, whether biblical or political." The island is seventeen miles only in length, nine miles in greatest breadth, and sixty miles in circumference. It is curious that in this wild island of Melita the apostle, having been looked upon as an atrocious criminal because a viper had fastened upon his hand, when he shook the reptile off without having received any injury, was admired as a god. In Melita, as in Lystra, the belief in gods under the human form had not yet given place to the incredulous spirit of the age.—*Milman*. All the influence however, acquired by miraculous power, Paul used in making the Saviour known to his uncivilized benefactors. Miracles were followed by the preaching of the gospel all through the winter months, during which Paul and his companions were detained in Malta by the suspension of navigation. The date when navigation was resumed was probably about the middle of February.

ANALYSIS.

- I. Recognizing the island, v. 1.
- II. Kindness of its inhabitants, v. 2.
- III. Change of opinion, vs. 3-6.
- IV. Entertained by Publius, v. 7.
- V. Miracles, vs. 8, 9.
- VI. Departure with benefits, v. 10.

DAILY READINGS.

- Mon.* Acts 28: 1-10.
Tues. v. 3; 2 Thess. 3: 7-18.
Wed. v. 5; Mark 16: 9-20.
Thurs. v. 6; Acts 14: 11-19.
Fri. v. 6; Matt. 11: 7-19.
Sat. v. 8; James 5: 13-19.
Sun. Ps. 2.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **called Melita**, the harbor was not then familiar to sailors, hence their previous doubt about it. It lies sixty miles south of Sicily and two hundred from the African coast. Its modern name is *Malta*. (2.) **barbarous people**, all persons were barbarians then who did not speak the Greek language (see 1 Cor. 14: 11); **of the cold**—i. e., in November. (3.) **when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks**, such as would be naturally found on the rocks along the shore. Paul was not one of those who live wholly upon other people's bounty, who sit down to the feast of life without any thought of paying charges. He saw an opportunity to work, and proved that laziness was not one of his characteristics. The picture of Paul gathering sticks on the island of Melita is one with which every child may be interested. This lesson may be carried, therefore, delightfully to the ears of the youngest classes (see 2 Thess. 3: 10); **came a viper out of the heat**, that had lain possibly concealed among the chips

and grown torpid from cold weather. The viper is the only species of viviparous serpents—that is, producing young in a living state—in Europe. By increasing population and civilization these evils are quite unknown in Malta to-day; **fastened on his hand**, vipers are accustomed to dart at their enemies, sometimes several feet at a bound.—*Professor Agassiz.* (4.) **when the barbarians saw**, knowing that Paul was a prisoner and seeing that a viper had leaped upon him, they reasoned that he was a dangerous criminal, worthy of the death that they supposed would speedily follow the bite of the viper. (5.) **and felt no harm**, the poison having produced no effect upon him. See Mark 16 : 18. (6.) **changed their minds**, the Lystrians had changed their minds from idolatry to the spirit of murder, the Melitans from the spirit of murder to idolatry. Compare Acts 14 : 11-18, 19, with this lesson. So it is with the world; now it cries “Hail!” now “Crucify!” now the reverse. “At one time *bulls* for worship, at another *stones* for slaying. Men err in nothing so much as in their judgment concerning the saints.”—*Bengel.* (7.) **chief man**, so called because he was the Roman governor, the deputy of the prætor of Sicily. Melita was conquered by the Romans in the first Punic war; **who received us**, not the two hundred and seventy-six on the vessel, but Paul, Luke, Aristarchus (27 : 2), “and no doubt the noble-hearted Julius.”—*Hackett.* (8.) **lay sick**, of dysentery in aggravated form, combined with fever; **prayed** (see James 5 : 14, 15); **laid his hands**. ch. 19 : 11, 12; Mark 6 : 5; 7 : 32; Luke 4 : 40. (10.) **when we departed**, after a probable stay in Malta of four months; **they laded us**, a peculiarly seasonable kindness after their losses by the shipwreck. These experiences among the Melitans, pagans though they were, show a degree of humanity left in the sad ruins of the fall.

“Not wholly lost, O Father !
Is this evil world of ours ;
Upward through its blood and ashes,
Spring afresh the Eden flowers.”—*Whittier.*

QUESTIONS.

On the Apostle at Melita.—At what date was Paul's shipwreck off from Malta? Was it thickly peopled then? Is it thinly peopled now? Of what other island was it a dependency? To what empire did both Sicily and Malta belong? What are the dimensions of Malta? Where upon it was St. Paul's Bay? How notable has been the history of this island? *Napoleon.*

snatched it from the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and it is now in the hands of the English, who took it from the French emperor. What was the language of the Melitans in the time of Paul? What have you to say of their superstitions? Will Christianity yet sweep paganism from the earth? Ps. 2 : 8.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Why had not these sailors recognized this island before?
- V. 2. What did the Greeks, and afterward the Romans, call all nations but themselves? 1 Cor. 14 : 11. Why did these Melitans show this shipwrecked company such special kindness? Why kindle a fire?
- V. 3. What interesting incident is here related? What trait does Paul here exhibit? The Indians call *laziness* the "original sin;" are they far from the truth? Where have we seen Paul at manual work before? ch. 18 : 3; 20 : 34; 1 Cor. 4 : 12; 9 : 6-12. What horrid creature leaps out of the fire kindled now on the Melitan coast? How was it possible for this to happen?
- V. 4. What suspicion do the natives now express? How does this show that the power of the conscience is universally prevalent? How that the thought of divine retribution is ineffaceably engraved on the heart of man? The Melitans supposed that *Nemesis*, the god of vengeance, had pursued Paul ashore, and that death would ensue from the bite of the viper. So Shakespeare speaks of the *asp-bitten* Cleopatra:

" Trembling she stood, and on the sudden dropped."

- V. 5. What does Paul do as a man having no fear?
- V. 6. How do the natives now change their minds? In what respect was their change of sentiment concerning Paul different from the changed opinion of the Lystrians? Why is there no dependence to be put on the world's judgment of God's people? Matt. 11 : 16-19.
- V. 7. Who was Publius? Who of the ship's company were entertained by him?
- V. 8. How was this courtesy repaid? What was his father's disease? How was he healed? Besides working miracles, what did Paul do on the island?
- V. 10. How long did Paul tarry at Melita? Why? When he departed, how was he laden? To whom did Paul count himself a debtor? See Golden Text.

Suggested Questions.—What virtues are often practiced by pagans and barbarians? Why should people in civilized lands excel pagans in virtues? What says Christ about this? Matt. 10 : 42. Does the greatest earthly morality entitle any one to salvation? What moral vipers are worse than slander, flattery, and worldliness? Why should neither flattery nor abuse keep us from proceeding on our Christian way in loving Christ and in doing good?

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise."—ROM. 1:14.

Dec. 16.]

LESSON XI.

PAUL AT ROME.—Acts 28:16-31. A. D. 62-64.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 28-31.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out* of the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they de-

parted, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Journey to Rome.--After a detention of three months at Melita, Julius placed his prisoners on board another Alexandrian ship, the "*Castor and Pollux*," which had wintered at the island. About the beginning of February, A. D. 61 or 62, they sailed first to Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, distant about eighty miles, where they remained three days; and thence they beat up to Rhegium, on the Italian side of the straits of Messina. After a day's waiting for the weather, a fair south wind sprung up and carried them on the following day about one hundred and eighty miles to their destination at Puteoli, north of the Bay of Naples, one of the chief ports for the corn-trade, and therefore for the landing of passengers. As might be expected, at a port in such constant communication with the east, they found here Christian brethren, at whose desire Paul spent a week with them, the centurion being evidently eager to show him unbounded courtesy. And from thence, when the brethren in Rome heard of Paul at Puteoli, they came to meet him at *Appii Forum*, forty-three miles from Rome, and also at *Three Taverns*, thirty-three miles from Rome. He went up from Puteoli on the celebrated Appian Way, the usual route trodden by so many travellers:

"Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power,
Legions and cohorts, turns of horse and wings,
Or embassies from regions far remote
In various habits, on the Appian road."--*Shakespeare.*

How many of these travellers must have looked down on the apostle and his escort with the same feelings with which we regard the weary and dismal march of a chained gang of convicts, little dreaming that he came a truer conqueror than any general who had led his legions along that road to enter Rome in triumph.

"And so went on to Rome."--*Smith's Hist.*

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Paul with the captain of the guard, v. 16.	Mon. Acts 28 : 11-31.
II. Addresses the chief Jews at Rome, vs. 17-24.	Tues. Rom. 9.
III. Prophecy fulfilled, vs. 25-28.	Wed. Rom. 10.
IV. Departure of the Jews, v. 29.	Thurs. Rom. 11.
V. Paul's subsequent life, vs. 30, 31.	Fri. Eph. 1.
	Sat. Col. 1.
	SUN. Philemon 1.

EXPLANATIONS.—(16.) **captain**, commander of the Prætorian camp; **to dwell by himself**, of course within the *Prætorium*—*i. e.*, the general's palace or quarters; **with a soldier that kept him**, hence Paul's touching allusions to his chains. v. 20; Eph. 3 : 1; 4 : 1; 6 : 20; Philemon 10, 13; 2 Tim. 1 : 16; 2 : 9. (17.) **chief of the Jews together**, explaining to them his present position exactly. (20.) **for the hope of Israel**—*i. e.*, the hope of a Messiah which the nation cherished. See 26 : 6; compare Rom. 10 : 1. (21.) **showed or spake any harm**, they had had no official report from Jerusalem about him. For this there had hardly been time. (22.) **this sect**, this Christian sect. See 24 : 14. (25.) **well spake the Holy Ghost**, an impressive conclusion of Paul's appeal to his countrymen at this crisis. "Here the curtain falls upon the contest of Jewish unbelief against the things that concerned their salvation. And this we incline to believe is the reason why the history of the Acts here breaks off. There, in the capital of the world, the unbelief of the last section of the Jewish family to whom Paul revealed the Messiah completed the first stage in the diffusion of Christianity, at which the mass of the Jewish race are for the time cut off from the kingdom of God. With respect to God's purposes touching the Jewish race, the three wonderful chapters (9, 10, and 11) of Romans should be carefully studied. These may be regarded as a supplement to the Acts." (28.) **sent unto the Gentiles**, as had been already announced in similar circumstances. See ch. 13 : 46; 18 : 6. (30.) **two whole years**—*i. e.*, A. D. spring 61 or 62 to spring A. D. 63 or 64. All this time a prisoner, during which he kept up constant intercourse with the Gentile churches, aided by faithful attendants and

messengers, who wrote and carried his letters. Among these were Luke, Timothy, Tychicus, Mark, Onesimus, and his fellow-prisoners Aristarchus and Epaphras. Eph. 6: 21; Phil. 1: 1; Col. 1: 1, 7; 4: 7, 10, 14; Philemon 1, 10, 23, 24. Paul in this time also writes of spiritual children whom he had begotten in his chains, of converts among Cæsar's household. Philemon 10; Phil. 4: 22. Toward the end of these two years Paul had looked confidently to his release. Of this, however, further in next lesson.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul's Journey to Rome.—How long was Paul detained at Melita? To what city did he then sail? To what port next? To what next? How far was Puteoli from Rhegium? On what bay was Puteoli? What beautiful mountain was in Paul's eye as he sailed into the Bay of Naples? When did it become volcanic? (A. D. 79.) The Jewish princess Drusilla, with the child she had borne to Felix, found a tomb in the ruins of Pompeii; where did Paul go from Puteoli? How far is Appii Forum from Rome? Who met him here? How was Paul affected by the meeting? What was the next stage of the journey on the way to Rome? How far was this from Rome? Over what celebrated road was Paul now travelling? He was a prisoner, but what was he more truly? Rom. 1: 15, 16.

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 16. Julius, the centurion, had treated Paul very kindly; to whom does he surrender him? What special consideration was now shown to Paul? How was Paul kept by a soldier?
- V. 17. Instead of courting acquaintance with the men of rank in Rome, whom does Paul at once seek out? How is he true to his custom in this? What was Paul's heart's desire? Rom. 10: 1. What does Paul say to the Jews?
- V. 21. What do the Jews say to Paul? What was Paul's only crime? Ans. *That of a dissenter from the established religion of Judea.* Would Felix or Festus or Agrippa be apt to send this specific charge up to Rome?
- V. 24. Some of the Jews believed, but the greater number disbelieved; what prophecy did their unbelief fulfil?
- V. 28. From all you can learn in the Bible, what should you say has been the great sin of the Jewish race? When will "blindness" be removed from it? See Rom. 11: 25.
- V. 29. Does Paul ever have a controversy with the Jews after this? How has he been true to them? How also to the Gentiles?
- V. 30. How long was Paul now a prisoner of Rome? Who were his companions? How was he employed during these two years? What royal converts did he have?

Phil. 4 : 22. Will you now in review trace the journey of Paul from Cæsarea to Rome? What was Paul's one aim? 1 Cor. 2 : 2.

To Superintendents or Pastors.—As a closing exercise, it will be profitable for you in the hearing of the whole school to point out on the Map the exact course of Paul's voyage from *Cæsarea* to *Puteoli*, and thence by land to *Rome*. Do it briefly, but clearly.

Luke as a Historian.—“What a noble theme—the progress of the gospel from *Jerusalem* to *Rome*—the writer of the book of the *Acts* has chosen! When will it be carried back to *Jerusalem*?”

GOLDEN TEXT.

“I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”
—Rom. 1 : 15, 16.

Dec. 23.]

LESSON XII.

PAUL'S LAST WORDS.—2 Tim. 4 : 1-8. A. D. 68.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 5-8.

1 I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith;

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Paul's First Imprisonment and Release.—(A. D. 62-64.) Luke gives us a definite statement of the duration of Paul's residence in Rome "in his own hired house" (Acts 28: 30), "with the evident implication that at the end of this time his condition changed. Paul had unusual freedom during these two years, though he continued to be guarded by a Roman soldier. Phil. 1: 13, 16. The interruption of his personal intercourse with the churches caused the apostle to address them by letter, and thus the restraint on his liberty proved the means of opening to him a sphere of activity which has given him access to all nations and made him the contemporary of every age."—*Hackett*. During this first captivity he wrote his Epistles to the *Ephesians*, the *Colossians*, the *Philippians*, and to *Philemon*. The quite uniform opinion of scholars is that under his appeal to Nero (A. D. 64) he was acquitted, and that, casting aside his chains, he went forth again to preach the gospel." See Phil. 1: 25; 2: 23, 24; Philemon 22. After his release and journey to Asia Minor, and possibly to Spain, he doubtless returned to Asia Minor and to Macedonia, and there wrote his *First Epistle to Timothy* and his *Epistle to Titus*.

Paul's Second Imprisonment and Martyrdom.—After three or four years of successful missionary labor in the East, to which Paul had returned, he was doubtless apprehended again as a leader of the Christian sect: was brought a second time as a prisoner of Christ to Rome; was tried there and condemned to death. "His Roman citizenship exempted him from the ignominy of crucifixion; hence, according to the universal tradition, he was beheaded by the axe of the licitor or executioner. The same testimony places his martyrdom in the year A. D. 68, the last year of Nero's reign." It was while daily expecting this event that he wrote the last of his Epistles, the *second to Timothy*. Thus the time of Paul's first and second imprisonments was clear gain to the Christian church. "As the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which Bunyan wrote in Bedford jail, is now the world's book, so Paul's Epistles written while a prisoner at Rome are now read in all parts of the earth."—*Dr. Hague*. Thus is the wrath of man made to praise God.

ANALYSIS.	DAILY READINGS.
I. Paul's last charge to Timothy, vs. 4, 5.	<i>Mon.</i> 2 Tim. 1. <i>Tues.</i> 2 Tim. 2. <i>Wed.</i> 2 Tim. 3. <i>Thurs.</i> 2 Tim. 4.
II. Paul in prospect of martyrdom, vs. 6-8.	<i>Fri.</i> v. 3; 1 Tim. 4. <i>Sat.</i> Heb. 11. <i>Sun.</i> Heb. 12.

EXPLANATIONS.—(1.) **I charge thee**, where Timothy was at this time is not known, but it is likely that he was at Ephesus. Paul felt the need in Rome of friends, and wrote to Timothy to come to him speedily. ch. 1: 15. But not knowing whether he would be spared to see Timothy, he fills his letter with most fatherly counsels, which his lips might not be permitted to utter; **the quick**—i. e., they who shall be

alive at Christ's coming (1 Cor. 15 : 51); **the dead** (see John 5 : 27-29); **at his appearing and his kingdom**, rather, "and I charge thee also by his appearing and his kingdom;" "his appearing is his last coming in glory; his kingdom that which he shall then reveal and set up."—Oosterzee. (2.) **preach the word**—*i. e.*, with open, oral proclamation. "Don't forget," said Dr. Jonah G. Warren when very ill, "*that God can convert grown-up heathen by the preaching of the gospel*;" **be instant**, assiduous, not only in season, but out of season, embracing opportunities already made, making opportunities when not made; **reprove**, in the sense of convince; **re-buke**, in the sense of admonish. (3.) **heap to themselves**, rather, "load themselves with;" **itching ears**, running after every new teacher whose fancies suit their inclination. (4.) **unto fables**—*i. e.*, unprofitable errors. See all this designated in 1 Tim. 4 : 1; 2 Tim. 3 : 1. (5.) **endure afflictions**, 2 Tim. 1 : 8; 2 : 3, 9; **do the work of an evangelist**, of *evangelists* generally: See Acts 21 : 8; Eph. 4 : 11. He was in particular one who went from place to place preaching the gospel to those without; **make full proof**—*i. e.*, thorough work. Give attention to all its parts. (6.) **for I am now ready to be offered**, literally, "I am already being poured out"—*i. e.*, as a drink offering. See Phil. 2 : 17. Paul regards his martyrdom as near and certain; **the time of my departure is at hand**, now has arrived. Paul says, "The season of my loosing the cable from this earthly shore on a voyage to the eternal harbor of heavenly peace."—Wordsworth. (7.) **I have fought**, Paul now takes a *retrospective* glance upon his past life, and follows it with a *prospective* glance upon its reward; **the good fight**, as a Christian warrior. See 1 Cor. 9 : 24-27; 1 Tim. 6 : 12; 2 Tim. 2 : 4; **my course**—*i. e.*, my race with my eye on the goal (Acts 20 : 24; Phil. 3 : 12-14); **kept the faith**—*i. e.*, the faith in Christ. "The thing expressed twice with a figure is expressed a third time without a figure."—Bengel. (8.) **Henceforth**, Paul now looks beyond death and the grave; **there is laid up for me**, a sure prize that cannot possibly escape. See Col. 1 : 5; 1 Pet. 1 : 4; **the crown of righteousness**—*i. e.*, of the righteousness which is by faith; **the righteous judge**, in contrast with unrighteousness; **at that day**, "the interval between death and the coming of the Lord seemed to Paul to be rolled up in a minimum;" **love his**

appearing, making it an object of warm and affectionate thought.

QUESTIONS.

On Paul's Two Imprisonments.—How long was Paul imprisoned at Rome at first? What Epistles did he write in these two years? When set at liberty, where did Paul probably go? What Epistles did Paul probably write after his release? When was he doubtless made a prisoner of Christ a second time? Where did he die as a martyr? Why was he not crucified? How was he killed? By whose imperial order? Ans. *Nero, who reigned A. D. 54-68.* Just before his death what Epistles did Paul write? How were his imprisonments a source of great gain to the Christian church? How is Paul a contemporary of every age?

On Bible Lesson.—

- V. 1. Where was Timothy now? Why does Paul write to him? Why does he so faithfully charge him? By what solemn events does he urge Timothy to fidelity? What is meant by Christ's appearing? What by his kingdom?
- V. 2. Is the word to be preached by *tongue* or by *pen*? If Paul had lived in our time, do you not think he would have greatly used the press? Why is the living voice the best vehicle of Christian truth? Is the preacher to be defensive or aggressive in his methods? Negative or positive in his utterances?
- V. 3. Why is "sound doctrine" opposed by this world? What kind of preaching does the world best like? Are there any "itching ears" in evangelical congregations to-day? What do you think of the growing tendency to run after the latest "star" preachers? Dr. Daniel Sharp of Boston used to say that if St. Paul were advertised to preach in the next block from his church on a given Sunday, it would be the duty of his people to stay by their own means of grace; do you agree with Dr. Sharp? What privileges of truancy have church-members that their pastors have not?
- V. 4. When men turn from the truth, do they not most readily accept error? Where have you seen such men?
- V. 5. Will you explain the *four* counsels in this verse?
- V. 6. Upon what does Paul now look as already present? Would Paul have thus spoken of departing if he had had no soul?
- V. 7. What two figures does he now use in witness to past fidelity? What one thing does he say he has kept?
- V. 8. Paul now looks forward; what does he see in store for him? What does he mean by "crown of righteousness"? Why does he speak of its being given "at that day"? Do you love the thought of Christ's appearing again a second time in glory to this world? Do you know when this will be? What should be the attitude of all concerning it? *Matt. 24 : 42 ; 2 Thess. 3 : 5.*

Suggested Questions.—Why should a young Timothy heed an aged Paul? When we look over the past in our life's evening-time, what should we be able to say? When we look beyond death and the grave, what should we be able to see? How many of those who have studied this year about Paul intend, like Paul, to serve Christ all their days? How many desire his reward? What comes before the crown?

Sing—

"The consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me."

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."—2 TIM. 4: 7.

Dec. 30.]

LESSON XIII.

FOURTH QUARTER REVIEW.

Theme.—**PROMINENT POINTS IN PAUL'S LIFE AND LABORS.**

DAILY READINGS.

Mon. Phil. 1.	Thurs. Phil. 4.
Tues. " 2.	Fri. Titus 1.
Wed. " 3.	Sat. " 2.
Sun. Titus 3.	

Note.—As hitherto it has been my custom, I have selected another special theme for a quarterly review, the last quarter in 1877. I believe that a special theme gives special interest and profit, the two things to be sought after in Bible study. For parts of two years we have now been studying the life and labors of Paul. What, therefore, should we more earnestly desire to recall and to hold firmly in mind than the points most prominent in his life and labors? On these, surely, the great work done by Paul in the world very largely depends.

I. Paul's Conversion.

- (a.) *History preceding his conversion.* Acts 7 : 58-60; Phil. 3 : 5; Acts 21 : 39; 22 : 28; 23 : 6; 18 : 3; 26 : 9-11; 1 Tim. 1 : 13.
- (b.) *Circumstances attending his conversion.* Acts 9 : 1-19; 26 : 12-18.
- (c.) *History immediately after his conversion.* Gal. 1 : 15-24; Acts 9 : 19-30.

II. Paul's Labors at Antioch.

- (a.) *The gospel among the Gentiles first takes root here.* Acts 11 : 19-21.
- (b.) *Barnabas sent to the church here.* 11 : 22-24.
- (c.) *Paul brought here.* 11 : 25, 26.
- (d.) *Errand to Jerusalem and return.* 11 : 27-29; 12 : 24, 25.

III. The First Missionary Journey.

- (a.) *To Cyprus.* Acts 13 : 1-12.
- (b.) *To Asia Minor.* 13 : 13-52; 14 : 1-21.
- (c.) *Return to Antioch.* 14 : 21-28.

IV. Council at Jerusalem.

- (a.) *Occasion of it.* Acts 15 : 1-5.
- (b.) *Council in session.* 6-18.
- (c.) *Decision of council.* 19-21.
- (d.) *Brought to Antioch.* 22-35.

V. The Second Missionary Journey.

- (a.) *The gospel preached in Europe at Philippi.* Acts 16.
- (b.) *Thessalonica and Berea.* 17 : 1-14.
- (c.) *Athens.* 17 : 15-34.
- (d.) *Corinth.* 18 : 1-17.
- (e.) *Return to Antioch.* 18 : 18-22.

VI. The Third Missionary Journey.

- (a.) *Chiefly passed at Ephesus.* Acts 19.
- (b.) *To Europe and back to Miletus.* 20 : 1-38.
- (c.) *Onward journey to Jerusalem.* 21 : 1-16.

VII. Fifth and Last Visit to Jerusalem.

- (a.) *Coneiliation of Jews attempted.* 21 : 20-26.
- (b.) *Paul seized by the populace.* 27-30.
- (c.) *Rescued by Claudius Lysias.* 31-36.

VIII. Imprisoned at Cæsarea.

- (a.) *Paul before Felix.* 24 : 1-26.
- (b.) *Paul before Festus.* 24 : 27; 25 : 1-12.
- (c.) *Paul before Agrippa.* 25 : 13-27; 26.

IX. Voyage to Rome.

- (a.) *Shipwreck at Melita.* Acts 27 : 1-44.
- (b.) *Detention at Melita.* 28 : 1-10.
- (c.) *Arrival at Rome.* 28 : 11-16.
- (d.) *Labors in Rome.* 28 : 17-31.

X. Paul's Commission Fulfilled.

- (a.) *To the Jews.* Acts 13 : 14; 17 : 1; 18 : 4; 28 : 17.
- (b.) *And also to the Gentiles.* 13 : 46, 47; 18 : 6; 28 : 25-28.

XI. Paul's Epistles.

- (a.) *First and Second Thessalonians*, at Corinth. A. D. 52, 53.
- (b.) *Galatians and First Corinthians*, at Ephesus. A. D. 56, 57.
- (c.) *Second Corinthians*, at Macedonia. A. D. 58.
- (d.) *Romans*, at Corinth. A. D. 58.
- (e.) *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews*, at Rome. A. D. 62-64.
- (f.) *First Timothy and Titus*, in Macedonia. A. D. 64-68.
- (g.) *Second Timothy*, at Rome. A. D. 68.

XII. Paul's Controlling Thoughts.

- (a.) *The Messiah of the Old Testament the Christ of the New.*
- (b.) *Christ and him crucified.*
- (c.) *Jesus and the resurrection.*
- (d.) *Salvation by grace.*

QUESTIONS.

- I. Where was Paul's native place? What was his early trade? Was he educated wholly in Tarsus? Who was his teacher at Jerusalem? At what trial is Paul first brought forward in history? How old was he then? *About 30.* What was he about when converted? Where did he go into retirement from Damascus? How long after his conversion did he return to Jerusalem? To what districts did he then go?
- II. Who carried the gospel first to Antioch? What layman went there to strengthen the church? Whom did Barnabas bring at once to Antioch? On what merciful errand did Barnabas and Paul then go?
- III. What city became the starting-point of Gentile Christianity in the East? Can you recall some of the places visited on the first missionary journey? Was the course of this journey at all outside of Asia?
- IV. On returning to Antioch, what trouble occurred? How was the difficulty between the Jewish and Gentile Christians settled? Who gave the final decision in the council at Jerusalem? What was the decision?
- V. In what city was the gospel first preached in Europe? What led Paul to this city? What afflictions did Paul suffer at Philippi? What other cities in Macedonia did Paul visit? What city afterward in Greece? Where in Athens was Paul invited to speak? Where in Greece did Paul go after leaving Athens? Why was Paul more successful in Corinth than in Athens?
- VI. Where did Paul spend the most of his time on his third missionary journey? Who was the divinity of the Ephesians? After visiting Europe again, to what city near to Ephesus did Paul return? What was the character of his address to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus? Why did he then push on to Jerusalem?

- VII. How many times before had Paul visited Jerusalem since his conversion? Did he ever visit it again? What was his first endeavor? By whom was he seized? Who rescued him? To whom did Lysias send him?
- VIII. What is the influence of Paul's defence upon Felix? Who was the wife of Felix? Where was she entombed? Ans. *In the ruins of Pompeii.* Before whom did Paul appeal to Cæsar? Why did Festus bring Paul before Agrippa? How did he treat Paul?
- IX. Will you state the course of Paul on his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome? Where was he wrecked? How long and in what season did he remain at Melita? What was his course then on the way to Rome? How long was his first imprisonment there? When was he beheaded?
- X. How was Paul true to the Jews? Why did he turn to the Gentiles?
- XI. What was the chronological order of Paul's Epistles, and where were they written?
- XII. What were some of his controlling thoughts? What was Paul's influence upon Judaism? What was his influence upon paganism? What has been the influence of his life and labors upon us? In what Pauline spirit should we begin the new year? 1 Cor. 2:2.

An Opinion.—Were I asked who among all men appears to be the greatest benefactor of our kind, I should name without hesitation the apostle Paul. A spiritual Atlas, Paul alone bears the pagan world upon his shoulders. That Roman empire which a whole people—the most powerful on the earth—took seven centuries to create, this single man took one-quarter of a century to create anew. And yet it was he who said, "*By the grace of God I am what I am.*"—*Adolphe Monod.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

"I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."—PHIL. 3:18.

"Let us, then, imitate Paul and take his noble, adamantine soul as our pattern, so that, following in his wake, we may safely sail over the stormy ocean of life and enter the waveless haven of peace, and thus obtain that salvation which God has prepared for those who love him, through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Ghost in like majesty and glory for ever."—*Chrysostom.*

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES.

(ACCORDING TO USHER.)

Table I.—The Undivided Monarchy.

B. C.	Scripture History.	Years of Reign.
1095	Saul chosen king.....	40
1075?	Samuel dies.	
1056	Death of Saul and Jonathan. David king at Hebron.....	7½
	Ten tribes resist under Abner. Ishbosheth king at Mahanaim	2
1050?		
1048	David king over all Israel..... {	32½, in all 40
	He takes Jebus (Jerusalem).	
1042	Removal of the ark.	
1040	Victories over Philistines.	
1023	Revolt of Absalom.	
1015	Death of David.	
1015	Accession of Solomon.....	40
1012	Foundation of temple.	
1006	Dedication of temple.	
975	Death of Solomon. Revolt of Jeroboam.	

Table II.—The Kingdom of Israel.

B. C.	Scripture History.	Years of Reign.
	(<i>First Dynasty.</i>)	
975	JEROBOAM I.....	22
	Calf-worship.	
954	NADAB.....	2
	(<i>Second Dynasty.</i>)	
953	Baasha.....	24
930	ELAH	2
929	ZIMRI.....	7 days
	Omri and Tibni.	
	(<i>Third Dynasty.</i>)	
925	OMRI..... {	6 or 12 from 930
918	AHAB.....	22
910?	Mission of <i>Elijah</i> . AHAZIAH	2
896	Ascent of <i>Elijah</i> . JEHORAM. Mission of <i>Elisha</i> . (<i>Fourth Dynasty.</i>)	
	JEHU.....	28
862	<i>Jonah</i> at Nineveh.	
856	JEHOAHASH.....	17
841	JEHOASH (Joash).....	16

Table II.—The Kingdom of Israel. (*Continued.*)

B. C.	Scripture History.	Years of Reign.
838	Death of Elisha.	
825	JEROBOAM II.....	41
808?	Amos and Hosea.	
784	(Interregnum?).....	11
773	ZACHARIAH.....	6 months
	(<i>End of Jehu's Dynasty.</i>)	
772	SHALLUM.	
	(<i>Fifth Dynasty.</i>)	
	MENAHM.....	10
761	PEKAHIAH.....	2
759	PEKAH.....	20
721	<i>Captivity of Israel.</i>	
	End of kings of Israel.	
	Israel never returned.	

Table III.—St. Paul's Missionary Life.
(ACCORDING TO HACKETT.)

A. D.	
46-47	<i>First Missionary Tour.</i> —Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Perga, Attalia, Antioch.
51-54 or 55	<i>Second Missionary Tour.</i> —Syria and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Samothracia, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, and Antioch.
55-58 or 59	<i>Third Missionary Tour.</i> —Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Troas, Macedonia, Illyricum, Greece, Corinth, Macedonia, Philippi, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, Miletus, Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, Cæsarea, Jerusalem.
59	Paul's missionary tours ended.

Table IV.—Paul's Travels as a Roman Prisoner.

A. D.	
59-61 or 62	From Jerusalem to Antipatris on road to Cæsarea; in captivity at Cæsarea two years; appeals to Cæsar; in the autumn of A. D. 60 or 61 embarks for Rome; is treated kindly at Sidon; is placed aboard an Alexandrian ship at Myra; is not permitted to take shelter in the harbor of Cnidus; is driven by the wind to Crete and Salmone; to Fair Havens, south of Crete; to Clauda; thence to Melita (Malta), Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome, reaching the latter city in the spring of A. D. 61 or 62. Here he dwells two years in "his own hired house;" writes many Epistles; is released; again imprisoned; and then suffers martyrdom.
66-68	

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